

**NESTORIAN
THEOLOGY**

MAR APREM

1980



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NESTORIAN THEOLOGY

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BY

MAR APREM

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NESTORIAN THEOLOGY

By Most Rev. Dr. MAR APREM

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PREFACE

Mar Narsai Press published the first and second parts of the *Doctor of Theology* dissertation of the Most. Rev. Mar Aprem. The encouragement we received from our readers in various countries prompted us to publish the remaining portion of that dissertation. As we explained in our previous publication it is not the exact reproduction of the dissertation. It is adopted to suit the interest of the readers of historical, liturgical and theological studies. The dissertation submitted to the Senate of Serampore was entitled "A study of the history, faith and worship of the Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur from A. D. 1814 to the present day." Our three volumes are entitled.

1. *The Chaldean Syrian Church in India* 1977
2. *The Sacraments of the Church of the East*, 1978
3. *Nestorian Theology*, 1980

This book is also numbered as the *Mar Narsai Press Golden Jubilee Series* No. 6 which began with the first two volumes of *The Nestorian Fathers and Nestorian Missions*.

We plan to bring out more volumes under the Golden Jubilee Series.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In a previous book we have examined the historical documents relating to the Chaldean Syrian Church in India. In the present book we shall consider the theology of that church as contained in its books and worship. Moreover, such a study will help us to determine some of the historical ambiguities we have noted in the previous book.

As we have seen in our discussion, the Chaldean community in Trichur underwent a change of allegiance resulting in the restoration of its pre-Portuguese, Pre-Sulaga period.¹ Let us examine the theology of this Church from the books that are in use in this church in the last and in the present century.

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1. It is very important to remember that the Nestorian connection of the Indian Church was cut off in the 16th century with a two edged sword. One is the unceasing labours of the Portuguese culminating in the Synod of Diamper of A. D. 1599 and the other is the split in the Nestorian Patriarchate in A. D. 1552 at the time of Sulaga. Often the students of Indian church history do seem to ignore this very significant fact.

Eastern churches generally have not formulated their faith in detailed doctrinal or confessional statements. Such detailed statements are a characteristic of the western churches. This does not, however, mean that the eastern churches have no clear understanding of their faith. They are expressed not so much in statements as in the liturgy, practices and tradition of the church. So our source for an understanding of the faith of the church and the liturgical books is the tradition of the church as given expression in its liturgy and practices.

In our study of the faith and doctrine of the Chaldean Syrian Church, the most important is Christology since it has been the bone of contention in the Nestorian controversy. Since the Trichur Church accepts Nestorius as a saint and his Christological position as sound doctrine it is important for us to see in detail the Christology of this church and to examine the prayer books such as *Khudra*,¹ *Gezza*,² *Kashkul*,³ *Kdam Wad Wather*,⁴ etc. in the following pages.

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1. *Khudra* is Breviary the largest prayer book. A manuscript dated, A.D. 1598 copied in Iran is found in this church. There is also a double volume *Khudra* written in 1628 used by the clergy in the Valiapally. The one volume *Khudra* of 1598 was used by the Metropolitan and kept in the chapel of the Metropolitan Palace. In 1961-62, the *Khudra* was printed in 3 volumes at Mar Narsai Press, Trichur by Mar Thoma Dharmo, Metropolitan.
 2. *Gezza* is a prayer book for festivals and Memorials except Sundays.
 3. *Kashkul*. means including all. It contains prayers for ordinary days.
 4. *Kdam Wad Wather*. means before and After. It consists of prayers of before and after. It includes Morning and evening Prayers and was printed in Syriac in Trichur in 1950 and in Kirkuk in 1968.

In addition to Christology, Mariology and saints are also discussed here. Mariology is undoubtedly connected with Christology. We cannot understand the place of Mary in the Christian Theology apart from the understanding of Christology, since Mary is the mother of Christ.⁵ The question of the veneration of saints and prayers to them and for them are also discussed.

The other theological issues such as the Trinity are also discussed here though it does not differ from general Trinitarian position. Because, we cannot understand Christology without understanding the doctrine of Trinity. Moreover, the doctrine of Trinity caused the schism of Arius earlier than Nestorius. Chaldean Syrian Church accepts the first two ecumenical councils of Nicea (A. D, 325) and Constantinople (A. D. 381)

The remaining section deals with the teachings of the church on the understanding of Mission. Worship, practices and Sacraments have been dealt with in a separate book.

5. The church of the East is like the Orthodox Syrian Church. "Strictly speaking", writes an Orthodox writer, "Orthodox Theology does not take up the person of Mary for isolated treatment, nor does it try to develop a separate theological discipline called Mariology. So-called Mariology is always understood, not as an appendix to, but as an integral part of Christology and of Ecclesiology as well." K. M. George: "Mariology—The Theotokos in the Orthodox Tradition." Unpublished paper read at Faith & Order Conference, Poona, 1972, P. 1.

In the study of the faith of this church one is confronted with a serious handicap that is the absence of outstanding theologians among the Nestorians during the recent centuries. George Percy Badger, an Anglican priest, visiting the Nestorians in Kurdistan in the middle of the 19th century refers to the ignorance of the members of this church regarding "the particular points on which they differ from other Christians, and fewer still are to be found who can give a reason from the faith which they profess".¹ The situation has not changed very much. Even today we come across the faithful as well as the clergy in this church who do not know much about their own doctrines and are not aware of the meanings of the Syriac prayers which they repeat every morning and evening. Nevertheless Badger is full of praise for the practice of rituals. He writes:²

Had the Christian faith as professed by the Nestorians been devoid of the outward symbolism of solemn rites, stated and ever-recurring commemorations, appointed seasons of public humiliation and religious festivity, a recognized priesthood consecrated to the especial service of the altar with a solemnity of inauguration calculated to affect and to

1. Badger, Vol. IV. P. 26.

2. *Ibid.* P. 27.

impress the minds of the people with a due regard for their sacerdotal function and in the discharge of their sacred office keeping up a constant remembrance of the claims of GOD upon the obedience and worship of His intelligent creatures, in all probability they would have mixed with the infidels among whom they dwelt, and have long ceased to exist as a body of professing Christians.

The lack of a recognized formula of creed is also lamented by Badger. It is true even today, except perhaps a small book of doctrines compiled by Mar Abimalek Thimotheus Metropolitan in A.D. 1914 which serves at present as a small Handbook of Doctrines and is called *Messianic Teachings*. The comment made by Badger before this book was compiled is worth quoting. He writes:¹

The task undertaken in the present dissertation would have been rendered much easier had the Nestorians possessed any recognized formula of their creed; but nothing of this kind exists among them. The nearest approach to a confession of faith is the treatise of Mar Abd Yeshua, a translation of which is given in Appendix B; but this is not only defective on many important points respecting which

1. Badger. Vol. II P. 28.

certain information is desirable; but it does not possess, as far as I know, that common consent of the Nestorians, requisite to entitle it to be considered a Symbol of the doctrines held by their community. As the production of an eminent ecclesiastic, filling an exalted office in their church, it is doubtless held in high esteem; but unsupported by older authority, and by the concurrent testimony of their standard rituals, its evidence is liable to be disregarded. And the same may be affirmed of the private opinions of any other individual writer however highly renowned for learning and piety he may chance to be.

Nevertheless as Badger himself admits "But the want of standard confession of faith among the Nestorians, is amply supplied by the voluminous matter contained in their church rituals....."¹ "The access of the valuable Syriac MSS in this church helps the present writer to delve deeper into the doctrines of this church as practised by them daily.

The strongest evidence for the faith and discipline of any church is the rituals in use in the

1. *Ibid.* This quotation and the one above were quoted in the *Defendant's Memorandum* in the *Trichur Church case*. O. S. 64 of 1088 (1911 A. D.) Chapter 3. Sources of Doctrines

church, especially in the case of a church which does not have a collection of doctrines. The law of prayer fixes the law of belief.² The conclusion of the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* in this connection is worth quoting.³

It is also obvious that any church or religion or sect is responsible for things contained in its liturgical books in quite another sense than for the contents of some private book of devotion which she at most only allows and tolerates. The only just way of judging of services, the tone and the *Ethos* of a religious body is to consult its liturgical books.

2. *Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. IX, P. 269

3. *Ibid.* Vol. XII. P. 269.

CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINE TRINITY

Like all the Christian denominations, the church of the East believes in the doctrine of Trinity. As Mar Abdisho, the author of Marga-neetha states "in the confession of the Trinity all Christians agree, for all receive the Nicene creed, which asserts (confesses) that the Trinity is co-equal in essence, dignity, power, and will;".

The doctrine of Trinity, as such, is not found in the Bible. But the biblical basis of this doctrine is obvious. That was the reason why it was accepted in the Nicene creed. The church of the East accepts the Nicene creed. In this respect, the church of the East has nothing to argue with or differ from other churches.

While we examine the doctrine of Trinity of the Chaidean Syrian Church in Trichur we are

impressed by the fact that most of the priestly prayers are concluded with the words "the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, for ever, Amen."¹

These words are to be repeated at the end of each prayer; Therefore in the Khudra after the first prayer in page 3 onwards only three dots are printed at the end of the priestly prayers, where the priest is expected to add the words "the Father, the son and the Holy Ghost for ever, Amen."²

Similarly at the beginning of any liturgical service or prayer, everybody is expected to sign the cross on his or her face with the words "In the name of Father, (the) Son and (the) Holy spirit, Amen."³ The *Prayer Book* gives instruction regarding the actions to be done when we say "In the name of the Father, (the) Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen,"⁴. The other formula "Glory be to the Father, and to (the) son & to (the) Holy Ghost"⁵ is said immediately after the Lord's prayer and in many other occasions such as the end of every Shuraya (a portion of the

1. Khudra Vol. I P. 2

2. Actually there is no rubric stating to add this formula in the place of the three dots printed. However, every priest knows that he is expected to substitute it. And in practice, it is always done.

3. Unfortunately this direction is not seen in the Khudra neither for the evening prayer, nor for the morning prayer. Nevertheless, in practice, it is always done.

4. *Prayer Book, in Malayalam*, P. 259

5. Khudra Vol. 1 P. 2.

Psalm)¹ and in between every *Onyatha* (anthem): The same is repeated between the first and second recital of the Trisagion.³ The Trisagion itself "Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy upon us" is itself a trinitarian formula.⁴

Let us now turn to the contents of some prayers with reference to the Trinity.

In Khudra we read:⁵

God the Father, and God the Son, the Word, and God the Holy Ghost, one substance, one God, in three co-equal persons, of whose being there is no beginning, and of whose Divinity there is no creation; He is living and everlasting. When He determined to make known the mystery of His being, He created."

In the litany of the Tuesday of the Rogation of the Ninavites, they pray:⁶

-
1. *Ibid.* P. 4
 2. *ibid.*
 3. *Ibid.* P. 8
 4. It must be understood that the Trisagion used in this church is without the later addition "Thou who wast crucified for us, have mercy upon us" which is found in the worship of the Syrian Orthodox church. The original trisagion did not contain this christological formula. It is possible that the non-chalcedonians added it to justify their Christology, generally, though not quite correctly termed Monophysite.
 5. From *Qanona* the Brasith or First Canon in Khudra and appointed to be read in the Morning Service of every Sunday throughout the year with the exception of the Sundays of the Lenten fast. Khudra Vol. 1. p. (cf. Badger. Vol II p. 30)
 6. Khudra Vol. 1 P 371 (cf. Badger. Vol II pp. 30-31)

O Thou righteous Father, and everlasting Son, and Holy Spirit, of invisible substance, incomprehensive, wonderful in Thy doings.....incorruptible, immortal; near to all, but comprehended by none; worshipped by angels and men in spirit and in truth; God without beginning and without end."

In the service for the Holy Nativity we read a little more explanation of the natures of the three persons in the Trinity. It says:¹

"And He (CHRIST) manifestly committed unto them (the Apostles) the whole hidden mystery of the God-Head, without addition or reserve. () That there is () one Essence in three Persons. The word "Essence" He applied to the three co-equal Persons, lest it should be thought that there are three essences having the same name. "Go ye into all the world, and disciple all nations in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST; the persons co-equal, one distinct Essence, and the latter part of the sentence points out the

1. Gezza. Holy Nativity Service.

Khudra. Vol. I. P. 545—584

Cf. Badger, Vol. II P. 31.

coequality of the Persons in this one and self-same "Essence."

Mar Abdisho the famous theologian in his book *Marganeetha* writes on Trinity as follows:¹

Now, he who is wise is wise because of his wisdom; and he who is living is living because he has life. This is the mystery of the Trinity, which the church confesses of the Adorable Essence: The Mind, Wisdom, and Life, Three co-essential properties in One, and One who is glorified in three properties. (The church) has called the Mind, FATHER and Begetter, because He is the Cause of all, and First. (She) has called the SON, Wisdom and Begotten, because He is begotten of of the Mind, and by Him everything was made and created. (She) has called Life the HOLY GHOST, and proceeding, because there is no other HOLY GHOST but He.

He also writes: "Now, as the reasonable soul has a three fold energy, mind, word and life, and is one and not three; even so should we conceive of the Three in One, and one in Three"² He uses

1. *Marganeetha* Part I. Chapter V.

2. *Ibid*

the classical example of the sun. He illustrates his point further saying:¹

The sun also which is one in its disk, radiance, and heat, is another simile adduced by the second Theologus Paul, the chosen vessel: "He is the brightness of His glory and the Express image of His Person;" and again: "Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

He also writes:²

The mystery of the Trinity is expressed in the words of the Old Testament: "Let us make man in our image after our likeness;" the occurrence of the letter *noon*³ three times in this sentence is an indication of the Trinity.

Trinitarian formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is repeated in their worship many times. Liturgical prayers always begin with this formula. Even the Lord's prayer is recited with the trinitarian formula at the beginning and the end. With the Trisagion (Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal have mercy upon us) the Trinitarian formula is said. The prayer *Lakhumara* known as the prayer of Adam, also has the Trinitarian formula.

1. *Marganeetha*. Part I, Chapter V, cf. Badger Vol. II P. 389.

2. *Ibid.* cf. Badger Vol. II P. 387.

3. The letter *noon* is the prefix for plural.

Even a baby is given the instruction in Trinity. The rubric in the Baptism service states that the baby is anointed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, thereby showing that he imprints the knowledge of the Trinity in his heart and that it is gifted from above"¹

From the service of baptism till the final service of burial, the belief in Trinity is affirmed by the members of this church. The tomb is sealed in "the name of the Father, (the) Son and the Holy Spirit for ever". In a single liturgical prayer, the Trinitarian formula is recited more than a dozen times.

It is important that the believers should not only recite the Trinitarian formula, but also sign the Cross while they recite this formula. There are two kinds of formula. One is "In the name of the Father, (the) Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen". The second is "Glory be to the Father, (the) Son and (the) Holy Spirit." For both these formulas, when Father is mentioned, three fingers of the right hand should touch the forehead, for Son, these three fingers should come down to the chest, and while "Holy" is said, the fingers should touch the right shoulder and for "Spirit," they should be on the left shoulder.

1. *Taxa* (Trichur english edition) *op. cit.* p. 156

Patriarch Timothy II discusses the signing of the Cross.

As to why the sign of the Cross go from right to left we say: We begin the sign from right to left to show our adherence to Christ. For, the church is considered as the bride of the heavenly groom who married her in his (baptism?)..... well then we start from the right side to the left from the right side of Adam that Eve had her origin.....¹

The same author quotes the Psalmist "The right hand of the Lord made miracle"² and argues that the right side should be first.

The belief in Trinity is the same as in other Orthodox Churches. This Church is different from the Roman Catholic only in the *filioque* clause introduced in the Nicene creed. This church says the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. They do not add "and the Son" after the word Father. In general, it can be stated that there is no serious difference of opinion in regard to Trinity as there is in the case of Christology.

1. Vat. Syr. 151 Fol 74r-75r quoted from Charles Payngot, *The cross: Its place in the Hudra and its sign in Baptism and Eucharist, Rome, 1971* p. 78.

2. Psalm 118:15.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTOLOGY

A. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

When we discuss the Christology of the Church of the East we are dealing with a very crucial controversy of the fifth century in which Nestorius of Constantinople representing the Antiochian thought on the one hand and Cyril of Alexandria representing the school of Alexandria on the other, are involved. Though the Church of the East was not officially involved in this controversy it is an historical fact that the church of the East in the Persian Empire later defended the Christological utterances of Nestorius.

The Greek doctors, Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius, were the fathers who initiated the discussion on the natures of Christ which lead to the

formation of Christological formula in the fifth century. Among the Syrian writers the Christological discussion began after the fifth century Christological controversy began in the Greek speaking Christianity. Therefore the Syrian fathers discussed here chronologically in this section come only after the Greek fathers Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius. Though St. Ephrem, was the most important Syrian theologian of the 4th century, he lived prior to this controversy; hence his concern was not christological.

B. THE GREEK FATHERS

While we examine the prayer books found in the Chaldean Syrian Church, we come across the reference to the three Greek Fathers, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius of Antioch. To mention these three together is the common custom of the Church of the East. That is the reason why it is called the Nestorian Church. It is a Church that venerates Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius; but it is not a church founded by any of the three. As a Nestorian Father of the 13th century Mar Abdisho says:¹

“As to the Easterns, however, because they never changed their faith, but kept it as they received it from the Apostles they were unjustly styled “Nestorians”, since Nestorius was not their Patriarch,

1. Marganeetha Part III Ch. IV.

neither did they hear that he taught the doctrine of two natures.....Nestorius then, followed them, and not they him and that more especially in the matter of the appellation "Mother of Christ."

The fifth Friday after the Epiphany is observed as a memorial to the Greek doctors *Malpan Yaonaye*.¹ The prayers for that day are seen in the *Khudra*.² The heading of these prayers is given as Memorial of Greek Doctors. The second line, like a sub-title states "Mar Diodorus and Mar Theodoros and Mar Nestorius"³ The next twenty printed pages of prayers have several references to these saints. In the morning prayer of the day we read in the *Mowtwa* (sitting):⁴

Holy priests, who preached Trinity in the four corners of the earth and who worked by their labours.

In that day's prayers we read.⁵

1. Syriac Calendar 1972. P. 3 month of *adar* (March) In some years the memorial of Greek doctors coincide with the memorial of Syrian doctors. But not always.
2. *Khudra* Vol. I. pp 741-760
3. *Ibid.* P. 741
4. *ibid.* P. P. 145—6
5. Quoted from A. A. King, Vol. II p. 313 Footnote 168. cf. Badger Vol. II p. 80. Unfortunately this is not found in the *Khudra* of the church of the East as well as in the 3 volume *Khudra* published by the Chaldean uniates of Mosul. Probably this was found in the MSS used by Badger in the middle East. Perhaps it was removed because in the recent years, especially after the contact of the Assyrians with the Anglicans in the 19th century some of the condemnation sentences of Cyril, Severus etc were not found to be very edifying and therefore slowly disappearing from the Syriac prayer books.

Woe and woe again to all that say that God died.....who say that Mary is the Mother of God.....who do not confess in Christ's two natures, two persons (hypostases), and one *Parsopa* of filiation. Woe and woe again to the wicked Cyril and Severus.

These prayers speak of Nestorius as *Kaddisha* (holy) Nestorius¹ and their holy teaching. All three, i. e., Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius are spoken of as Teachers (Malpane), priests and holy men (*Kadisha*)

These three fathers are so important to the church of the East, that their names are mentioned not only on the Memorial of the Greek Doctors but every day in the litany of the evening prayers² as well as in the litany of the liturgy.³ In the litany these three are remembered along with the three Syrian teachers. i. e. Ephrem, Narsai and Abraham.⁴

1. *Ibid.* P. 754.

2. Khudra Vol. I. P. 416. Litany.

3. Liturgy of Adai & Mari P. 215

4. The Memorial for the Syrian Fathers is also observed in the Church of the East. The prayers for it are found immediately after the prayers of the Greek Fathers. The names of the Syrian Fathers mentioned here are five instead of the usual three Ephrem, Narsai and Abraham, adding Lolyane and Yokhannan (John). Khudra Vol. I. pp. 761-779. The names of Michael and Barsuma are mentioned in the prayers. Khudra Vol. I. p. 774.

It is interesting to note that the Memorial Day of the Greek Fathers coincide with the Memorial Day of the Syriac Fathers in some years such as 1972. But in 1973 they happen to be on two different Fridays. Greek on February 9 and Syriac on February 23.

C. BIBLICAL BASIS OF THIS CHRISTOLOGY

Our present concern is not to examine whether Nestorius taught or intended to teach the doctrines attributed to him and condemned as his. The bitter tale of this unhappy controversy has been told so often and so fully especially in the recent years, that it makes a re-telling irrelevant and unnecessary. Moreover, space does not permit us to go into its historical details.

Much has been written on the historical aspect of the unfortunate fate of Nestorius and his teachings. Too little has been said or written, however, to discuss and determine the biblical basis of the Christology of Nestorius. The present writer, though a chiefly student of Church History, has made in the following pages an attempt, for the first time, to enter the special field of New Testament exegesis, to study the Pauline passages used by Nestorius in the *Bazaar of Heracleides*, to do justice to the doctrinal aspect of the Nestorian controversy or to be precise, and to find the biblical basis of the Nestorian Christology.

Nestorius has always been primarily interested in finding scriptural foundation to the teachings he upheld as orthodox and adequate. He quoted from both the old and the New Testaments quite often to support and substantiate his arguments.

He appealed to Scriptures as final authority.¹ The concluding sentence of Book I part I of the *Bazaar* bears testimony to the truth of the above statement. Here, Nestorius writes:

Therefore the words of the Divine Scriptures befit not Christ in any other manner than this; but as we have examined and found, all refer not to the union of the nature but to the natural and hypostatic *prosopon*.²

Yes, Nestorius examined and found the truth of his teachings in the Divine Scriptures. At the same time, it must be stated that Nestorius has never been considered even by his supporters as a biblical exegete *par excellence*. It is Theodore of Mopsuestia, the famous disciple of Diodore of Tarsus, who bears the title "the Interpreter" (*Mpashkana*) among the Nestorians. Nevertheless, the importance of the biblical exegesis of Nestorius should not be minimised. It is, in essence, the interpretation of the School of Antioch including that of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the "Interpreter."

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1. Not only Nestorius, but the Nestorian theologians after him appealed to the Scriptures too often. For example 64 passages from the Old Testament and 311 passages from the N. T. have been quoted once or more in the book *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Text*, edited and translated by Luise Abrahamowski and Alan E Goodmans Cambridge University Press, 1972.
 2. *Bazaar*, pp. 85, 86.

All those who have written on the Christology of Nestorius are students of either Church History or Theology. It is unfortunate that no biblical scholar—particularly no New Testament scholar—has undertaken to study this very interesting and important subject from the point of view of his special field. The following pages, it is hoped, will justify the need for such an undertaking.

1. PAULINE PASSAGES

Like his rival Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius too appealed to the scriptures in defence of his teachings. The *Bazaar of Heracleides* has numerous references to the Gospels, Epistles and in some cases to the Old Testament too. As the *Bazaar* does not have an index of the biblical passages cited, let us turn to the pages of this important work of Nestorius to have an idea of the extent of the use of the Bible in the theological system of Nestorius.

It is true that Nestorius has written various works other than the *Bazaar*. According to the Nestorian Metropolitan Avdeesho (Ebed-Jesus d. 1318), Nestorius the patriarch wrote many excellent books which the blasphemers (viz. the anti-Nestorians) have destroyed.¹ "*Tragedy*",

1. F. Looft, *Nestorius*, Cambridge: University Press, 1914, P. 3.

"*Bazaar of Heracleides*", "Letter addressed to Coasmas", "Book of Letters," and a "Book of Homilies and Sermons" are usually ascribed to Nestorius. Nevertheless, the "*Bazaar of Heracleides*" is the only complete work extant. Consequently, attention of our present paper is focused only upon that work.

Among the biblical references in the *Bazaar*, let us limit our interest, only to the works of Paul. The Philippians, chapter 2, occupies the first rank among the Pauline passages cited. The verses 5 to 11 of this chapter have been referred to twenty two times.¹ The second place is taken by I Corinthians Chapter XV, which has seven references. One verse from each of the chapters 10 and 12 of the same Epistle has also been quoted. Each of the Epistles to the Romans, Colossians and Galatians has been mentioned twice. There is also one reference to I Timothy 2: 5.

The extent to which Nestorius used these Pauline passages can be understood by looking at the following table which shows that the same passage has been referred to again and again whether in the beginning or the middle or the end of the *Bazaar or Heracleides*.

1. Probably this is one of the reasons why the English translators of the *Bazaar* (Driver & Hodgson) observe: "His few points are repeated again and again with monotonous consistency" (*Bazaar*, P. XXXV)

Philippians	2 :	08-11	Bazaar, p.	40
		09-10		55
		09		57
		08		58
		06		60
		07		61
		09-11		61
		08		68
		07		69
		07		79
		09		89
		07		90
		09		91
		07-08		165
		08		165
		09-11		165
		97-09		165
		09		166
		10-11		171
		05-07		207
		05-07		214
		10-11		217

The references from I Corinthian XV are :—

I Corinthian	XV :	47 . .	Bazaar p.	41
		45		41
		47		42
		48		42
		49		42
		45		42
		21		184

The other references are as follows :

I Corinthians	X :	16	...	30
	XII :	27		12

Romans	V :	6-7	70
		10	257
Galatians	IV :	4	188
	III :	19	53
Colossians	I :	18	56
	II :	9	51
I Timothy	II :	5	51

The above references will make it clear that the following is not a complete treatment of Pauline Christology. There are certain passages which are indispensable in any discussion of Pauline Christology such as Romans V. 12-21, which is not found in the above table. Nevertheless, the Pauline passages found in this paper are not a random selection. The discrimination is based on the fact that there are some passages quoted in the *Bazaar of Heracleides* and some not. The passages treated by Nestorius are discussed here. Because, the concern here is to principally focus our attention mainly on Nestorius and his agreements and disagreements with the concern of Paul rather than a detailed discussion of Pauline Christology.

2. CHRISTOLOGICAL TITLES

Among the titles used by Paul to designate Jesus, we have *Christos*, *Kyrios*, Son of Man, and *Marana*. It is surprising that Paul did not use the title "Son of God". We shall also see the significance of the title *ebed Yahweh*.

(a) CHRISTOS

Christos was a title-perhaps a very important one indeed. It was sometimes used alone and sometimes in combination with 'Jesus'. It lost its particular significance as a proper name only. Though it is true even in Pauline writings R. H. Fuller rightly points out the exceptions such as

The "suffering" formulae, where whether used alone, or in combination with , and usually preceding¹ is still to be understood in a titular sense.

It is now used in combination with other titles as *Kyrios*.

(b) KURIOS

St. Paul writes to the Philippians:

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.²

Paul is not the inventor of the idea that Jesus is *Kurios*. It was taken from the experience of

1. R. H. Fuller, *The foundations of the New Testament Christology*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965, P. 241 f. n. 68.

2. Phil : 2: 9-11

the Lord in the earliest Christian worship. This is the name above every name. Because *Kyrios* is the translation of the Hebrew *Adonai*. God bestowed His own name on Jesus. Or, in other words, *Kyrios Jesus* is equal with God. Cullmann points out that 'Jesus is *Kyrios*' meant a lot in the face of persecution.' Moreover, it was a rebuke to those who said "Anathema Jesus".²

Paul's most-beloved name for Jesus was not Messiah, but *Kyrios*. The use of the term came from the Septuagint rather than the pagan mystery cults, as some suggested.

(c) SON OF MAN

Paul's primary concern is the idea of the incarnate Heavenly Man. Paul finds solution to the Jewish problem of the relation between the Son of Man and Adam entirely in agreement with Jesus' self-consciousness. Cullmann comments:

In Judaism too the idea of representation is implicit in the Son of Man concept although Judaism does not see the connection between human sin and the Son of Man in the same way.³

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1. Oscar Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1959, p. 220.
 2. I Corinthians 12: 3. (cf. Cullmann, p. 218).
 3. Cullmann, p. 173.

(d) MARAN

The Aramaic expression '*Marana tha*' used by Paul in I Corinthians 16:22. If it is taken as *Maran atha*, it means "Our Lord comes". If it is taken as *Marana - tha*, it means "Our Lord, Come!" The Aramaic or Syriac word *Mar* means Lord. This can be used also as a polite form of address.¹ However, referring to the liturgical use of this expression in the early Christianity, Cullmann concludes:

Mar must here approach the meaning implied by the formula *Kyrios Christos*. It must mean practically the same as 'divine ruler.' *He* is the one who comes when bread is broken in the assembled Church, the same Lord who will return at the end, complete all things and who already now (invisibly) reigns.²

(e) EBED YAHWEH

Ebed Yahweh is the Aramaic word for the servant of God. In the minds of the Jews it was a title of Messiah. The official Jewish messianism, however did not entertain the idea of vicarious

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1. Nestorius, who is considered as a saint among the Nestorians, is called *Mar Nestorius*. It is a title used for all saints and the bishops in the Syrian Churches.
 2. Cullmann, p. 213.

suffering and atoning death. As far as Pauline Christology is concerned, the atoning death of Jesus has a central place. As a matter of fact, Paul never used *ebed Yahuweh* as a Christological title. "But", observes Cullmann, "according to two of the most important Christological texts Paul makes use of ideas relative to the *ebed Yahuweh* and his atoning work."¹

To Nestorius, 'Son' refers to the pre-existent Logos which takes the flesh in the Incarnation. His concern is to maintain the traditional unity in Christ. The name 'Son' permits no division. The two natures are united in one 'Son'. His statement on this is quite clear and Grillmeier, the Roman Catholic historian, calls it "one of the best pages of his (Nestorius) Christology."²

It goes without saying that Nestorius used the title *Christos*. It was the bone of contention between him and Cyril of Alexandria. When Cyril advocated the adoption of the non-biblical phrase '*Theotokos*' as a title for the blessed Virgin Mary, Nestorius insisted on the use of '*Christotokos*' as the appropriate phrase since she was the mother of Christ.³

1. Cullmann, p. 79.

2. Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, translated by J. S. Bowden, London : A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1965, p. 379.

3. Bazaar, p. 99.

Nestorius unequivocally declares that the child born of Mary was at no time a separate man, but at the same time Man-God. Anastos reminds us

This is a favorite subject with him and he repeatedly gives utterance to his conviction that in Jesus Christ God and man were one—....., as when he argues that the child (the human Jesus) and the Lord of the Child (the divine Logos) are the same.¹

3. HISTORICAL JESUS

There is a propensity among some scholars to show that those who want to emphasise 'Jesus of history' appeal to the Synoptic gospels and those who are interested in the 'Christ of faith' find support in the Fourth Gospel. This is not completely true. Norman Pittenger writes:

Yet in the total life and experience of the whole Christian fellowship, there is a bringing-together of these two modes of understanding, so that it is neither the so-called 'Jesus of history' only, as the true and perfect Man, nor the 'Christ of faith' only, as the supreme action of God towards his human children, but the fact of *Jesus Christ*, the true Man in whom

1. Milton V. Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. XVI, Harvard University, 1962, p. 128.

God dwells and through whom he acts, which constitutes the real and abiding centre of that life and experience.¹

It is sometimes argued that the historical Jesus did not mean much to Paul. But J. S. Stewart states "it meant everything to him."² Paul had known a lot about Jesus as a person, although there is no sufficient proof to establish that Paul ever met Jesus. Even the things which are unknown to us today—as they were not written down—may have been familiar to Paul. Stewart states:

The earthly and heavenly Christ were one: and never while Paul gloried in his daily fellowship with the eternally living Redeemer did he cease to ponder on the life and walk and character of One who by entering history had changed all history for ever.³

On the other hand, George Hendry argues the absence of reference to the life of Jesus in Pauline writings point to the conclusion that it was not important to Paul. He continues:

The evidence makes it impossible to agree with those who declare it is

1. W. Norman Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate*. New York : Harper & Bros. 1959 p. 2

2. J. S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ*, New York : Harper & Bros, 1935, p. 285.

3. *Ibid*, p. 286.

“reckless” (H. A. A. Kennedy) or “idle” (Baillie, Bultmann) to say that Paul had no interest in the historical Jesus. The facts of the incarnation—that Christ came in our flesh, that he was born of a woman and found in fashion as a man—are certainly essential elements in Paul’s gospel; but the details of the incarnate life appear to have no place in it.¹

F. Loofs states that the view which interprets I Cor. 15: 47 f as if Paul thought of Jesus in his pre-existence as a heavenly man is an erroneous one. He further argues that when Paul says of Christ in Philippians 2:7 He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, he is speaking of ‘historical Jesus.’²

The concern of Nestorius was also to show that Jesus was truly a man. Nestorius spoke of a Jesus who was tempted as we are. By emphasising the true humanity of Jesus Christ Nestorius bears testimony to the historical Jesus. Philippians 2: 8b speaks of “even death on the Cross.” This text is quoted by Nestorius to refer to the historical fact of salvation. Nestorius writes:

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1. George S. Hendry, *The Gospel of the Incarnation*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958, p. 40.
 2. F. Loofs, *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913, p. 221.

—he made use of the *prosopon* of him who died and was crucified as his own *prosopon*, and in his own *prosopon*, he made use of the things which appertained unto him who died and was crucified and was exalted.¹

NEW ADAM

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive".² This important verse which speaks of the relation of Adam and Christ is not quoted by Nestorius. However, Nestorius deals with this topic when his imaginary questioner, Sophronius, draws his attention to the later verses of the same chapter. Paul writes:

Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven."³ Just as we have borne the image of the man of heaven.

1. Bazaar, p. 58.

2. I. Cor. XV. 22

3. I Cor. XV. 45-49.

According to Loofs, *Bazaar of Heracleides* clearly shows "a new line of thought";¹ when Nestorius speaks of Adam and Logos. As Adam lost the image of Logos which he received at the time of creation, the Logos Himself came down to efface the fault of the first man. Thus the purpose of the Incarnation was to give back the original image to man. Loofs remarks in this connection:

Only he (Logos) could do it; *apart from him there was nothing divine or honourable*; and only in the manhood could this renovation take place. Nestorius gives in this connection a complete answer to the question: *Cur deus homo?* and it is not only by physical categories as in Athanasius '*de incarnatione*' that Nestorius argues.²

Attention should be drawn to the fact that Nestorius in his biblical exegesis followed the literalistic, anti-allegorical method employed by Theodore of Mopsuestia and favoured in Antiochene circles. Richard Norris states that it was "Theodore who propounded the undoubted original of the Nestorian Christology".³

1. Loofs, *Nestorius*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 88, 89.

3. R. A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, P. XI.

In one of the most recent works on this subject Robin Scroggs has something to say about the significance of Philippians 2: 5-11. He writes:

While the subtlety of the allusions in this passage defies positive identification, many scholars have argued that behind the obedient services of Christ lies a contrast with the disobedient self-assertion of Adam.¹

After making mention of the arguments of some scholars, he concludes:

The difficulty is, of course, that these verses are likely a pre-Pauline hymn; thus reasoning from what Paul says elsewhere to this passage is not without its difficulties. Furthermore Paul nowhere else suggests that man covets divinity. To say more than that an Adamic allusion possibly may be found in Philippians 2 is unwarranted.²

Karl Barth concludes his excellent essay entitled *Christ and Adam, Man and Humanity in Romans 5*, stating:

Christ is not only God's Son; He is also a man who is not a sinner like Adam and all of us. He is a true man and in an absolute sense, and it

1. Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966' pp. 89-90.

2. *Ibid.* p. 90.

is in His humanity that we have to recognize true human nature in the condition and character in which it was willed and created by God. To here certainly belongs this unity of men and humanity.¹

IMAGE OF GOD

Paul writing to the Philippians, gives expression to one of the most important thoughts of the whole of the New Testament. He writes:

Who, though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God anything to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.²

The Greek word used by Paul in Philippians 2: 6 is *morphe* which means form. This word "form" firmly establishes the connection between Jesus and Adam. The syriac Bible known as the Peshitta uses the word ܕܡܘܬܐ (*demutha*) in the place of *morphe*. 'Thus', concludes Cullmann, "*morphe* in Phil 2:6 is immediately related to the concept *eikon* since the Semitic root word *Demuth* or its synonym *Selem* can correspond to either of the two Greek words"³ He continues:

1. Karl Barth, *Christ and Adam*, S. J. T., No. 5, 1956, p. 45.

2. Philippians 2: 6 7. R. S. V.

3. Cullmann, P. 176.

This means that v. 5 does not refer to Jesus' divine 'nature' but rather to the image of God which he possesses from the beginning. We find ourselves, then, completely in a context relating to the Heavenly Man who is the only one to fulfil the divine destiny of being the image of God.¹

The 'form of God' and the 'form of a servant' are two key phrases to which we should turn our attention. Nestorius argues that this statement supports his point of view against Cyril of Alexandria, i.e., the 'prosopic union' over against the 'hypostatic union'. As we shall deal with the concept of 'prosopic union' later, let us now turn our attention to see how Nestorius made use of the concept of the image of God for the development of his Christology. In the *Bazaar of Heracleides* Nestorius writes:

He took the likeness of a servant: and the likeness of the servant was not the *ousis* of a man, but he who took it made it (his) likeness and his *prosopon*. And he became the likeness of man, but he became not the nature of man, although it was the nature of a man which he took; he who took it came to be in the likeness of man, whilst he who took it and not

1. *Ibid.*

that which was taken was found in *schema* as man: for that which was taken was the *ousis* and nature of man, whereas he who took was found in *schema* as man without being the nature of man.¹

In order to understand the meaning of Nestorius better we shall listen to the explanation found in Bethune Baker's scholarly work which attracted the attention of the English-speaking world to the teachings of Nestorius. Bethune Baker writes:²

The Syriac word ܕܡܘܬܐ *dmutha* is the natural equivalent for the two Greek words *homiosis* (Gen. 1. 26) and *morphe* (Phil. 2:6, 7.). When therefore there is reference to the passage in Gen. we should understand that it translated the former Greek word, when to Phil. ii the latter. Now all through this work Nestorius appears to use *morphe* in a strongly theological sense which is practically equivalent to the sense he gives to *phusis* (*kyana*, 'nature'), *hupostasis* (*qnoma*), and *ousia* (*ousia*). This is certainly so whenever there is a reference to Phil, ii.

Logos became man. He took the form of a servant. He was a sinless man, though the

1. *Bazaar*, p. 165.

2. J. F. Bethune Baker, *Nestorius and his Teaching*, Cambridge: University Press, 1908, p. 152. footnote 1.

possibility of sin was open to him, as he was a perfect man. Being a sinless man, he was able to restore the mankind to the image of God. Loofs writes:

The main thing is that the Logos of a servant brought into existence a sinless man; hence the stress is laid on the moral and religious development of Jesus.¹

Nestorius says that the incarnation took place through an intelligent and rational soul. The soul, therefore, is the relation between Logos and man. This is a voluntary union. Here we find a union of free will. The relation becomes so close that one cannot be separated from the other. Or, in the terminology of Paul, Nestorius says that the 'form of God' shows itself in the 'form of a servant' and the 'form of a servant' is acting in the 'form of God'. Loofs concludes:

If thus justice is done to the idea of the unity of the nature in one person, then Nestorius too made it intelligible even where he, dealing with the *Logos* on the one side and the man on the other, tries to understand the union as the result of the incarnation.²

The word 'Likeness' is a crucial term in the writings of Nestorius. He refers to the Creation

1. Loofs, *Nestorius*, p. 88.

2. *Ibid*, p. 93.

story in Genesis where God created man in his own image and likeness. He argues:

And it was congruous with the dispensation which is for our sake that both of them should be taken into the *prosopon* for, because God created the first man in his own image and in his likeness and the *prosopa* of God the Maker — of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit — were not revealed to us, so that we might also know the Creator and obtain completely the teaching of the Divine knowledge and receive in completeness a complete idea of the image of God, he has renewed all creation in Christ and has made known and shown unto us what the maker is.....¹.

It must be stated, however, that 'image of God' is not a very important doctrine to Nestorius. His concern is Christological. Here, he differs from Irenaeus and the majority of the Church Fathers. In *Bazaar of Heracleides*, he never discusses the 'image of God' in itself. His interest is not man's creation in the image of God, but the image of God as it was found in Christ.

The image of God is both the perfect revelation of God as well as perfection of the human

1. *Bazaar*, pp. 58, 59.

nature. Or, in other words, image of God, to Nestorius, includes both the human and the divine *prosopa*. In his exegesis of the Philippian hymn Nestorius equates the image of God with the *prosopon* of union. When Nestorius used Genesis 1: 26-7 to explain Philippians chapter 2, the resulting exegesis expounds prosopic union. Rowan Greer states:

Therefore the image of God is the perfect expression of God to us men. The image of God, understood in this sense, can be thought of as the divine *prosopon*. God dwells in Christ and perfectly reveals himself to men through him. Yet the two *prosopa* are really one image of God.¹

The same author rightly thinks that Nestorius' use of the image of God solves "in a fairly coherent way the fundamental problems of the Antiochene Christology".² No doubt, it adds to the biblical foundation of the thought of Nestorius, and brings him more in line with Paul.

Looking back to the Christological controversy of the fifth century Dawe states that "Cyril found the kenotic idea helpful in his struggle against the Antiochian Christology".³ Cyril was primarily concerned with the unity of divinity and

1 Rowan Greer, p. 50.

2. *Ibid* p. 60.

3. Donald Dawe, p. 28.

humanity in Christ. Cyril argued that the 'word became flesh' meant 'a limitation or kenosis of the Divine subject rather than the exaltation of the human'.¹

However, a careful examination of the *Bazaar of Heracleides* leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the idea of kenotic Motif is not the monopoly of the Alexandrian school or of Cyril of Alexandria, as Donald Dawe would like us to believe, but, on the contrary, it is a strong weapon in the hands of Nestorius to refute the 'Apollinarian' tendencies of Cyril's Christology. Nestorius explains:

And he is both God and man, and the likeness of God in condescension and in *kenosis* and in *schema*, (and the likeness of his flesh as man; and the man is by exaltation what God is, through the name which is above all names, Consequently in the kenosis he humbled himself *unto the death, even death upon the cross*, in that he made use of the *prosopon* of him who died and was crucified as his own *prosopon*, and in his own *prosopon* he made use of the things which appertained unto him who died and was crucified and was exalted².

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Bazaar*, p. 28.

Philippians 2: 5-11 has been shown as a pre-Pauline liturgical hymn by Lohmeyer.¹ However Cullmann comments that this 'very probable thesis, cannot be 'definitely proved'.² Nevertheless it must be added that this hymn, whatever its origin may be is typically Pauline in language and in theological emphasis.

Verse 8 which describes incarnate life as our humiliation and obedience unto death, R. H. Fuller points out, "is not just straightforward historical description but an assessment of Jesus in terms of an earthly Christology based on the Adam/Christ typology"³ Fuller gives the alternate:

If we agree that the hymn is non-Pauline in origin and the Adam/Christ typology underlies verse 8, it follows, that this typology is not a Pauline creation but the common stock of the gentile mission.⁴

According to Cullmann, "Although Paul also in this passage uses material handed down to him, he certainly has made its ideas his own",⁵ The same author states that "in these few verses we actually possess a complete Christology in condensed form".⁶

1. R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of the New Testament Christology*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965, p. 204.

2. Cullmann, p. 174-5. (3) & (4) Fuller, p. 211.

5. Cullmann p. 77 (6) Ibid, p. 180.

Emptying himself and taking the form of servant does not mean belittling the importance of the incarnate Lord. As Nestorianism has been traditionally misinterpreted to have been denied the divinity of Christ, Nestorius' kenotic motif has been described as "Christ is the servant of God" in the Catholic Encyclopedia.¹ But to an impartial observer, the concern of Nestorius here is in agreement with that of Paul.

7. PAULINE, NOT NESTORIAN

Having looked at the various aspects of Christology which are found in the writings of Paul as well as in Nestorius in the forgone pages, let us briefly mention three aspects of Christology which are found in Pauline writings, but not in Nestorius. As these three points are considerably important and very much prominent in discussion these days, it is not proper to ignore them.

As far as Nestorius was concerned, these three aspects were not very important to him. However, let us look at them to see whether the Christology of Nestorius lacks any vital elements which are conducive to our adequate understanding of Jesus Christ and the history of salvation. They are justification, *en Christo*, and Christ & Spirit. And, no doubt, any discussion of Pauline

1. A. J. Mass "Communicatio Idiomatum", in the Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. IV, New York: Robert Appleton Co, 1908 p. 169.

Christology today without making mention of these three aspects must be considered defective and incomplete.

a. JUSTIFICATION

The doctrine of Justification found in Paul's Christology became in the recent centuries a topic of increasing interest among many students of Christology. And it stirred up many controversies and heated debates. But not so with Nestorius. The reason is probably the simple fact that Nestorius lived more than a thousand years before Luther. Some writers tend to belittle the importance of this doctrine calling it a Protestant Prejudice. On the other hand, many scholars consider it an important and essential doctrine.

It has a definite place in any discussion on Christology. J. S. Stewart states: "Strange, surely, that this 'disastrous creation', this child of controversy, should have possessed such vitalizing power throughout the centuries."¹ To men like Brunner, justification is "the most incomprehensible thing that exists."² Nevertheless, we should admit that 'God who justifies the ungodly'³ is a great truth which Paul preaches.

1. J. S. Stewart, *op. cit*, p. 244

2. Cf. *Ibid*, p. 243.

3. Romans. 4:5

b. EN CHRISTO

The concept "En Christo", considered an important aspect in Pauline Christology in the recent years, does not find expression in the *Bazaar of Heracleides*. John A. T. Robinson declares that "one could say without exaggeration that the concept of the body forms the keystone of Paul's theology".¹ He rightly thinks that the word knits together all the great themes found in the writings of Paul. Robinson continues:

Here, with the exception of the doctrines of God, are represented all the main tenets of the Christian Faith the doctrines of Man, Sin, the Incarnation and Atonement, the Church, the Sacraments, Sanctification and Eschatology. To trace the subtle links and intersection between the different senses of this word is to grasp the thread that leads through the maze of Pauline thought.²

c. CHRIST AND SPIRIT

Paul relates Christ with the Spirit. It is indubitably one of the most fascinating points of Pauline Christology. Some scholars argue that Paul completely identified Christ and the Spirit.

1. John A. T., Robinson, *The Body*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1952, p. 9

2. *Ibid*

CHRISTOLOGY

But it is too much to read into the Pauline thought. To Paul, it only means that to the man who is united with Christ by faith, the Spirit is bestowed as the divine gift. Stewart states:

And always there was the thrilling certainty that the Spirit, as at present experienced, was only the "firstfruits" the "pledge and instalment", the "fore-taste" of a coming blessedness, when all believers, freed at last and for ever from the body of humiliation, would bear the very image of Christ, and be clothed in a spiritual body like that of their already glorified Spirit—Lord.¹

In the light of Christ we can understand the Spirit and with the help of the Spirit we can accept the divinity of Christ. The Spirit leads us to the whole truth. The concern of Paul was that every man admits that Jesus is Kyrios.

8. PROSOPIC UNION

With the help of Pauline writings Nestorius gave expression to his doctrine of Incarnation. It is not easy to understand the meaning of *prosopon*, which A. R. Vine calls "the highly specialized yet unexplained word".² Grillmeier, a Roman Catholic

1. J. S. Stewart, *op. cit.* p. 311

2. A. R. Vine, *An Approach to Christology*. London: Independent Press, 1948, p. 190.

scholar on the Christological controversies explains that "prosopon is a collective term for all that pertains to the characteristics of a nature inwardly and outwardly", He continues:

The prosopon is the appearance, the way in which a thing is seen and judged and honored, it is also the way in which it acts and exists. In other words, Nestorius gathers together all the characteristics properties (idiomata), the physical appearance and condition, the moral attitude, the spiritual actions and functions and finally the reactions which they summon up in man. Each nature realized in concrete existence has its natural prosopon. Just as each concrete ousia is a hypostasis, so too it has a prosopon of its own.¹

Though a victim of the philosophical argumentation and Aristotelian thinking of the School of Antioch, Nestorius went beyond the limitations of philosophical vocabulary. He stated his doctrine of prosopic union in terms of Phil, ii. By doing so Nestorius was able, as Rowan Greer puts it, "by a kind of theological alchemy to transform the barren categories of what might otherwise be a

1. Grillmeir, *op. cit.* 385.

stultified philosophy into something very much alive".¹

Nestorius uses the metaphors of the Burning Bush, the human nature as the temple in which God dwells etc. to illustrate his theory. He rejects the imagery of the body and soul. Because they are incomplete natures, whereas the union of God and man in Christ is an example of the union of complete natures.² His metaphor of a king and a servant has been quoted quite often by his opponents to expose the deficiency of his Christology. But Nestorius argues:

As a king and a lord, who has taken the *prosopon* of a servant as his own *prosopon* and gives his *prosopon* to the servant and makes known that he is the other and the other he, is content to be abased in the *prosopon* of the servant while the servant is revered in the *prosopon* of the lord and king, and for this reason, even though I should not have said the one for the other not the other for the one, it is so with both of them who are one and possess the same *prosopon*—(so) are these things in regard to the two natures which are distinct in *ousis* but are united by love and in the same *prosopon*.³

1. Rowan Greer, *op. cit.* p. 48.

2. Cf. Rowan Greer, pp. 58, 59.

3. *Bazaar*, p. 55.

As a matter of fact the above mentioned metaphor is nothing but a variant of Philippians Chapter 2. It is true that it is misleading. But as J. N. D. Kelly puts it, "his guiding principles are at any rate clear". He continues:

"A thorough-going Antiochene, he insisted that the two natures of the incarnate Christ remained unaltered and distinct in the union".¹ The same author states that Nestorius was "reluctant to recognize the word as the subject". He further admits that Nestorius "had no alternative to propose".²

Norman Pittenger vehemently attacks the critics of Theodore and Nestorius in the following words:

The most complete, the fullest, the most organic and integrated union of God-head and manhood which is conceivable is precisely one in which by gracious indwelling of God in man and by manhood's free response in surrender and love, there is established a relationship which is neither accidental nor incidental, on the one hand, nor mechanical or physical, on the other; but a full, free,

1. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958, p. 312.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

gracious unity of the two in Jesus Christ, who is both the farthest reach of God the word into the life of man and also (and by consequence) the richest response of man to God. I am frank to say that for my part I can conceive of no other way of bringing the two together which does not deny the deity of God or wreck the reality of man's own existence. ¹

Does Nestorius' doctrine of prosopic union provide an adequate statement of the two natures of Christ? The answer to this question is a matter of opinion. Though as a seeker after truth Nestorius has many sympathizers, his doctrine of the prosopic union does not have many followers even among his sympathizers. Our concern here is to ask whether Nestorius' extensive use of Pauline quotations, in any way, improves his position. Rowan Greer thinks it does and states that it "rescues Nestorius' prosopic union from the realm of sophistry". ²

It is true that no human terminology can convey the mysterious union of divine and human in one person adequately. But Nestorius was successful to a great extent. Rowan Greer concludes:

That success is not in the realm of water-tight philosophical categorization but

1. Pittenger, *op. cit.* p. 188.

2. Greer, *op. cit.* p. 60.

rather in the realm of conveying in an extremely forceful way the truth that "God was in Christ" and that Christ is one with us.¹

9. SUMMARY.

"The ultimate question to ask about a Christology, whether ancient or modern", writes Lionel Thornton, "is no question of technicalities."² "The chief concern of the Bishop of Constantinople", writes Grillmeier, "is to provide for a clear distinction of the natures in the face of the heretical tendencies of his time, whether real or only supposedly so".³

In this connection, the words of Alan Richardson are interesting. He suggests that the Definition of Chalcedon does not attempt to give us a theory, but only "provides us with the postulates or data of Christological theory".⁴ Had the Chalcedonian Fathers formulated a theory, it would have been out of date. He rightly points out that:

But because they were content merely to enunciate a principle, the Chalcedonians

1. *Ibid*, p. 61.

2. Lionel S. Thornton, *The incarnate Lord*, London: Longman's Green & Co., 1928, p. 234.

3. Grillmeier, *op. cit.* p. 379.

4. Alan Richardson. *Creeds in the making*, London: S. C. M., 1951 p. 85.

handed down to all succeeding ages a standard by which every theory might be tested and judged.¹

After scrutinising the Pauline passages of Nestorius' Bazaar, we realize the truth of the remark of Sellers that "if the Church has her Christian Platonists, she has also her Christian Aristotelians"². In the remarkable work on Nestorius and his teachings Bethune Baker observes:

However outspoken he was, however one sided his phrases may seem, they are at least always straight forward. Perhaps his very straight forwardness was his bane.³

Nestorius wanted his arguments to be tested and judged by Scriptures. Nestorius claims to have read "all the New Testament". Challenging his opponents, he writes:

If thou readest all the New (Testament), thou canst not find therein that death is imputed unto God the Word, but either unto Christ or unto the Lord or unto the Son.⁴

1. *Ibid.*

2. R. V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*, London: SPCK, 1940. p. 109.

3. Bethune Baker, *op. cit.* p. 78.

4. *Bazaar*, p. 259.

It has been asked sometimes whether study of Bazaar would lead us to an adequate understanding of the view of Nestorius. Some scholars suppose without sufficient support, that the thought of the *Bazaar* is the modified view of Nestorius, as it was written only two decades after the storm of controversy at Ephesus. J.N.D. Kelly replies to these critics by stating that "while he may have expressed himself more temperately in it, there is no reason to suspect that he had altered his fundamental position".¹

In conclusion, we can state that the Pauline ideas of self emptying, image of God, form of a servant, historical Jesus etc. are found in Nestorius though his main concern is to relate all these Pauline ideas and phrases to formulate his theory of Prosopic union.

The relevance of the Nestorian Christology lies in its appreciation of the humanity of our Lord. The emphasis on humanity was a necessity in the fifth century to counter the influence of Apollinarianism. It is just as relevant today. G. L. Prestige argues:

Redemption requires a human response and human appropriation, God Himself supplied a perfect human agent to lead

1. Kelly, *op. cit.* p. 312.

response and a perfect human instrument to convey the means of appropriation.¹

Cyril C. Richardson in his article "A Preface to Christology", rightly remarks that only Nestorians can answer the question "wherein lies the reality of Jesus' temptation? wherein is his human freedom"?²

The French Roman Catholic-theologian, Pere J. Mahe, who made a fresh examination of the writings of Theodore, was led to the conclusion that the two Christologies of Antioch and Alexandria, inspite of notable difference, were alike perfectly Orthodox.

The following statement from the New Catholic Encyclopedia reflects the modern Catholic assessment of the Christology of Nestorius;

Nestorius never spoke of 'two sons', nor did he consider Christ as simply a man (*purus homo*): hence it was improper on the part of Eusebius of Doryleum to accuse him of the Adoptionism of Paul of Samosata, a theology that saw Christ

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1. G. L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* London: S. P. C. K., 1948, p. 149.
 2. Cyril C. Richardson, "A Preface to Christology", *Religion in Life*, Vol. XXVII 4, 1958, p. 508.
 3. Pere J. Mahe in the *Revue d'histoire ecclesiastique*, Vol. VII, No. 3, July 1906, Quoted from Bethune BaKer, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

as a man through his sufferings and virtues attained the dignity of a Son of God (Bewahrungstheologie).¹

Since the rediscovery of the Bazaar of *Heracleides* of Nestorius in the end of the 19th century. Historians such as A. Harnack, F. Loofs, J. F. Bethune Baker and Duchesne tried to establish a good name for Nestorius, as he is held in the Church of the East. The Roman Catholic theologian A. Grillmeir has also recognised the importance of the theological position of Nestorius, although he cannot totally appreciate the Nestorian formulas.

The Anglican Church is the only Christian denomination which made an official attempt to examine the Orthodoxy of the Christology of the Nestorians. Lambeth Conference of 1920 received the report from the special committee appointed by the 1908 Lambeth Conference for this purpose. This committee was perfectly satisfied about the doctrinal explanations given by the authorities of the Nestorian Church which led to the recommendation of occasional inter-communion between the Anglican Church and the Nestorian Church. About the controversial word *Qnoma* in the Report reads:

1. P. T. Camelot, "Nestorianism" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York: Mc Graw Hill Book Company, Vol. X, 1967, p. 347.

One phrase has caused some perplexity, that which asserts that there are in Christ one *Persopa* (ܦܪܫܘܬܐ) two *Qnoma* and two natures. The word *Qnoma* is equivalent of 'hypostasis' and if used in the later sense of that word i. e., as meaning 'person', it would imply real Nestorianism., But research had made it plain that it is used in the earlier sense of 'hypostasis', namely, substance, and this makes the phrase, if redundant, at least perfectly Orthodox.¹

It has been generally understood that Nestorianism was very much closer to Chalcedonian understanding of Christ. Aloys Grillmeier, a Roman Catholic, observes: As his (Nestorius') formulas and his joyful welcome to the Tome of Leo show, he stood at the very gateway of Chalcedon."²

In the light of the historical accident that took place in A. D. 1665 when a considerable number of Syrian Christians of Kerala changed from the East Syrian tradition which has been discussed in chapter I, it is desirable to reconsider the traditional understanding of these two Christologies. The difference between Cyril and Nestorius is

1. *Lambeth Conferences (1867 - 1930)*, London: S. P. C. K., 1948.

2. Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, (tr. J. S. Bowden) London, A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd, 1965, P. 452.

narrower than what the partisans of both have attempted to show in the past. When we are stripped off the personal prejudices prevalent in the past we are able to discover the points of contact. M. V. Anastos. A Greek Orthodox writer. gives us a new direction to explore further, when he points out:

..... the Christology of Nestorius, if Orthodox, should be reconcilable, notwithstanding angry denials on both sides, with Cyril's.....The line which separates them on this.....is either very thin or non-existent.¹

This irenical note is visible when V. C. Samuel, a noted theologian of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. assures that the West Syrian Church "never maintained a position which explains away the manhood of Jesus Christ."² The same writer also explains that the earthly life, passion and death of Jesus Christ are real. The accusation of the Nestorians against the "Monophysites" is that the latter's refusal to use the preposition *in* two natures referring to Jesus Christ is equivalent to saying that it was a mixture of two natures that functioned in Christ after the incarnation thereby

1. M. V. Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. 16, Harvard, 1962, p. 189.

2. V. C. Samuel, "The Manhood of Jesus Christ in the Tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church", *Bangalore Theological Forum*.

losing the properties of both humanity and divinity. But V. C. Samuel writes.

He was, therefore, 'from two natures' not only at the time of His conception in the womb, but also at every moment in His life. Neither of the natures was at any time lost or quiescent. Therefore, although Christ was not 'in two natures', the two natures were there in Him always.¹

V. C. Samuel's sympathetic observation should lead both the friends and foes of the Antiochene Christology to attempt to discover the points of contact between the Christological positions of both Antioch and Alexandria.

It is clear, therefore, that the Antiochene Christology deserves a more objective evaluation than has often been given to it. Within their intellectual milieu men like Theodore have tried to maintain a position what, at least from their point of view, was not one of two sons.²

Explaining the Alexandrian and Antiochene Christologies in a nutshell, V. C. Samuel observes that:

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1. *ibid.*, b. 27.
 2. V. C. Samuel, *A Fresh Look at the Council of Chalcedon and the Split in the Eastern Church: A Historical and Theological Survey*, Unpublished manuscript, s. 533.

Although the Antiochenes had insisted that Christ was 'two natures after the union', they had affirmed also that there was a union of the natures in Him. Thus both sides were agreed about a union of the natures, but they disagreed in interpreting the nature of the union. Whereas the Alexandrians saw the union in hypostasis, the Antiochenes saw it in prosopon.¹

Christ was in "two natures after the union" was the central idea in the Christology of the Antiochene school.

Although it is generally supposed that the Antiochene Christology is closer to Chalcedonian view, V. C. Samuel observes that "the agreement between Severus and the Antiochene side is more than the agreement between the Chalcedonian side and the Antiochenes."² V. C. Samuel rightly remarks:

That Jesus Christ is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood is affirmed by both sides, with equal connection and determination. The difference between the two traditions lies, in actual fact, in the interpretation which each of them offers to the unity of Christ.³

1. *ibid.*, p. 38.

2. *ibid.*, p. 534.

3. *ibid.*, p. 537.

In recent years theological consultations between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians have taken place beginning with that of Aarhus, Denmark in August, 1964, which helped to clear up the "inherited misunderstandings." They declared: "Fifteen centuries of alienation have not led us astray from the faith of Fathers."¹ No such serious study has been undertaken by any so far to see whether the inherited misunderstandings of the non-Chalcedonians with the Nestorians can be cleared up.

In the case of the non-Chalcedonians with the Chalcedonians they have a common father namely Cyril of Alexandria. But in the case of a dialogue between the non-Chalcedonians and the Nestorians, there is no common father to begin with. But at the same time if both sides can admit that misunderstandings are mutual, there begins an opportunity to discover the true teachings of each other. Such a dialogue has never taken place. It is possible to produce fruitful results if such a dialogue takes place. The common identity of the Syrian Christians in Kerala prior to the unconscious change of loyalty of a large body of the Syrian Christians in A. D. 1665 which this dissertation has shown, should challenge the Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur and the Orthodox Syrian Church in India to lead

1. *Herder Correspondence*, Vol. 2. No 5, May 1965, p. 137.

to the proposition that the difference in two prepositions "of" and "in" concerning the two natures of Christ do safeguard the perfect divinity and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ confessed by both these Syrian Churches.

In a recent study Poikail George, an Indian student of Nestorian Christology, after stating that "the static categories which he (Nestorius) used were terribly inadequate to describe the dynamic reality of Jesus Christ"¹ points out that:

Nestorius made a genuine effort to understand and hold that emphasizing divinity or humanity exclusively and at the cost of each other does havoc to our understanding of redemption.²

Poikail pleads for an adequate Christology which he calls "a 'third world' capsulization, trying to bring together the two fundamental questions from the Antiochene and Alexandrian traditions."³ He thinks that the Antiochene school lost their way "in the static Greek metaphysical swamp". According to Poikail, the Alexandrian school too failed to give an adequate answer to the question "what is the function of Christ"? due to their

1. Poikail J. George, "Reflections on Christian Mission—A Third World Perspective", *Occasional Bulletin from the Missionary Research Library*, Vol. XXIII, No. 13, November 1973. p. 3

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*, p. 5.

efforts to make this a mystical enterprise, through spiritualization and without adequate attention to historical exegesis''¹

B. SYRIAN FATHERS:

Usually Ephrem, Narsai and Abraham are called the Syrian Doctors of the Church in the litany and many other prayers. As for Christology Ephrem is not very important for our discussion for the simple reason that he happened to live before the Christological controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries. Therefore among Syrian Doctors we have to depend mainly on Narsai whose Christology is discussed here. Since we do not have many writings of Abraham come down to us on Christology we have to discuss about Bawai and his famous theological treatise *De Unione*. From the later period we have Mar Abdisho (d. 1318) whose famous work *Marganeetha* has already figured in our discussion. Since he lived in a later period, his name is not mentioned in any of the liturgical books.² Nevertheless his importance as a systematic theologian of the East Syrian Church of the later period cannot be ignored.

1. *ibid.*,

2. The main Liturgical prayer book Khudra was compiled in the 7th century.

1. MAR NARSAI.

Many of the poems of Narsai¹ were published by the well known Chaldean priest Alphonsse Mingana in two volumes at Mosul in 1905 A. D. However the English speaking world got the opportunity to read and appreciate this great literary genius only in 1910 A. D. when the Roman Catholic English monk Dom R. H. Connolly published an English translation of four of the homilies which deal with liturgical matters. Dom Connolly, Syriac scholar mentioned by Bethune Baker in his *Nestorius & His Teachings* has given his comments on some of his theological points. Being a Roman Catholic, he has shown considerable hesitancy in associating with the theology of Mar Narsai, it being Nestorian. However, Mar Narsai's famous homilies on sacraments like Baptism and Eucharist can be read and judged by the English knowing people. E. C. Whitaker

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1. Mar Narsai, a fellow worker of Mar Bar Sauma, the Metropolitan of Nisibis, is highly esteemed in the Church of the East and is known as the "Harp of the Holy Spirit". He was a professor in the famous seminary at Edessa. But when the Edessan Seminary was closed in 457 A. D.: Narsai accompanied Mar Bar Sauma and founded the school of Nisibis, which became great centre of learning of the Church of the East in the following centuries. According to the Syrian historian Bar Hebraeus, Mar Narsai worked in Nisibis for fifty years as the Principal of that famous Seminary. There he taught the doctrine of the Church. He defended the Church from the Monophysite attacks. Therefore Monophysites hated him. This is the reason why, the Syrian historian out of jealousy, called him Narsai, the leper. He died in 502 or 503 A. D.

has reproduced two of the homilies from Dom Connolly in his book the *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*.¹

Much of the theological achievements of the patriarchate of Mar Babai (497-502) owes its credit to Narsai. There were no official confessions published by the Church of the East for about seventy years after the year 486.² It is true that we should make a distinction between the theology of the church and the theology of theologians. Nevertheless though only personal utterances of an individual, the poems of Narsai still exercise a tremendous influence in the Church of the East.

Needless to say that Narsai is anti-Cyrriline, like all the supporters of Nestorius. He writes said Cyril, "why does he not call Mary 'Mother of the Godhead'?" She who bore essential being in fleshly wise, in that he became flesh.³

He explains the two natures of Christ in the following poem:

Blame the evangelists, if blame you must,
For their books express the distinction of
the word and the body
Nay, even our Lord lies under their rebuke,

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1. E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, London S. P. C. K., 1960 p. p. 42 — 48.
 2. Synod of Seleucia — Ctesiphon.
 3. Narsai: *Mimra*. x: 267 (cf. Wigram W. A, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, London, S. P. C. K., 1910, p. 271)

Who showed in his body the print of nail;
 and smitting spear;
 Declaring the nature of essential being
 and the nature of man.¹

Concerning the controversial term 'Qnoma'
 Narsai writes:-²

Heretics say: "the Word was changed,
 and became flesh as it is written;
 He did not take a body from Mary,
 but His 'Qnoma' became flesh.
 It was not that the Word was changed,
 and became flesh in His Qnoma,
 But the Word clad Himself with flesh
 that in it He might set us mortals free.
 It was not that the Word changed,
 but that He took manhood;
 The manhood underwent birth, growth
 thirst, hunger and death in due time.

Though Narsai spoke of the two distinctive natures, he was careful to avoid the notions of two sons or two persons in Christ. He writes "Let not the reader think, in reading 'Man', that I mean two sons, for the son is one indeed."³

1. *Ibid.* *Mimra* x: 414 (cf. Wigram; *op. cit.* p. 271)

2. Narsai, *Mimra* XI. (cf. Wigram; *op. cit.* p. 271)

3. *Ibid.*; (cf. Wigram; *Op. cit.* 272) These and many other passages of Narsai can be cited to prove the opposite of what Narsai was trying to emphasize. In some cases he had to overstate matters. That was the reason why this theological star of first magnitude was not accepted by the western church. Some of his overstatements, however, were necessary to defend the faith and in many cases he guarded truth against the Eutychian tendencies. Wigram is right in pointing out that no statement of Narsai is more emphatically 'Nestorian' than those in the 'De Incarnatione' of St Athanasius of Alexandria. (Wigram; *op. cit.*; p. 273)

A student of Narsai is attracted more often to the peculiarity of his style, especially when he writes in his favourite twelve syllabic metre. A special 'Qanona'¹ on the distinctive actions of the two concrete and abstract natures of Christ has added further doubts in the minds of the students of Chirstology. This beautiful poem of great literary achievement and a fine piece of literary composition of Narsai is appreciated by the supporters of Narsai, but criticised by those who are opposed to the Christology of the Church of the East. After explaining his Christology as one '*Parsopa*' two '*Qnoma*' and two '*Kiane*', Narsai sings:

Thus does all the Church of the Orthodox
confess

Thus also have the approved doctors.
of the Church taught, Diodorus, and
Theodorus, and Mar Nestorius.

He was laid in a manger and wrapped
in swaddling clothes as man;
and the watchers extolled Him with
their praises, as God.

He offered sacrifices according to the
Law, as man; and received worship from
the Persians, as God.....

He kept the law completely as man, and
He gave His own new law, as God.....

1. A short prayer of thanksgiving and praise.

He bore His cross upon His shoulder, as
 man, and He revealed and announced
 He cried out upon the cross 'My God, My
 God' as man; and He promised paradise
 to the thief, as God.....¹

It is difficult to find a proper English translation for the word '*Qnoma*'.² The other two words '*Kiana*' and '*Parsopa*' are properly translated as nature and person. If the word '*Qnoma*' is not used, then the Christology of one '*Parsopa*' and two '*Kiana*' is identical with the Chalcedonian Christology. '*Qnoma*' make it distinct from other Christological formularies.

In conclusion, Narsai, can be called "Nestorian" in the sense that he taught one person two *Qnoma* and two natures. It should be noted however, that the writings of Nestorius were not translated to Syriac until a few years after the death of Narsai.

1. The complete text is given in R. H. Connolly *the Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Texts and Studies, Vol. VIII., Cambridge: University Press, 1909, pp. 14—15. An elaboration of this poem is found in the Syriac book known as Khudra and an English translation is given in Badger; op. cit; pp. 35—38.
2. Fr. Placid Podipara, the well known Indian Syriac scholar working in Rome, finds the same difficulty. He writes, "The first namely *Kiana*, is equivalent to the Greek *Phusis*. The other two *qnomo* and *Parsopa* had their ambiguous significations just as their Greek counterparts *hypostasis* and *prosopon*". Fr. Placid Podipara, "The Christology of Babai the Great or the non-Catholic East Syrians" or "The Nestorians". Unpublished paper p. 1.

The authority to which Narsai would have based his Christological conclusion was, no doubt, that of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Greek theologian, who became accepted as the "Interpreter" of the Church of the East. Probably the Christology of Narsai should be more accurately called as Mopsuestian rather than Nestorian.¹

2. MAR BAWAI.

A very important passage in *De Unione* of Mar Bawai² tries to explain how the two natures are united in the one person of Jesus Christ, who is God and man. Mar Bawai writes³ 'we apply the term *hypostasis* to the particular substance (*ousia*), which subsists in its own single

1. Fr. William F. Macomber thinks this to be true of the Christology of Church of the East. (Cf. W. F. Macomber S. J. "The Christology the synod of Seleucia Ctesiphon. A. D. 486," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, Vol. No. 1—2 Rome 1958. P. 143 note 4.

2. After Narsai, Bawai the Great (569—628) is considered the greatest theologian of the Nestorian Church. In his teaching Bawai agrees with Narsai. The most famous book is the *Book of the Union*. In this book Bawai rejected not only the Council of Ephesus of 431 but also the Council of Chalcedon of 451 A. D.

In general agreement with all the Nestorians Bawai denied the title *theotokos*. He venerated the three Greek doctors of the church of the East, ie. Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius of Antioch. He attacked both the Monophysites as well as the Khenanians.

Bawai the Great is not the same as Mar Bawai, the Abbot of Mount Izla in whose patriarchate the Church of the East accepted the definite 'Nestorian' doctrine in 497 A. D. The theologian Bawai the Great never became a Patriarch.

3. Bawai. *De Unione* ch. XX *apud*; J. Labourt; *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse*. pp. 283-5 cf. Bethune Baker *op. cit* pp. 228-9.

being, numerically one and separate from the rest, not in so far as it is individualized, but in so far as, if it belongs to a class of things created, rational and free, it receives various properties.....
*Hypostasis* is invariable in its kind (*eidos*) for the nature of the *hypostasis* is common to it and to all like hypostasis''.

Bawai then goes on to explain the word person: ¹

As to person, it is that characteristic of the *Hypostasis* which distinguishes it from other hypostases. The particular characteristic which the hypostasis possesses, is not the hypostasis itself, the term *person* is used of that which makes the distinction.

In *Khudra* we come across a famous anthem written by Bawai beginning with the words "Brikh Khannana"². This anthem, which is sung in the Advent season until the epiphany,³ speaks about Virgin Birth, Two natures in the person of Christ etc. Bawai sings.

Blessed be the compassionate one, who has graciously sustained our life by the prophecies; for Isaiah saw, with the eye

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Brikh Khannana* means Blessed be the compassionate one.

3. Used for the morning worship from the first Sunday in Advent until Epiphany.

of his mind, the wonderful Virginborn; and Mary brought forth Emmanuel, the the son of God, without marriage. He being formed of her by the Holy Ghost, (as it is written) to be an adorable abode and temple for the rays of the Father, in one Filiation, which (body) at the commencement of his wonderful conception He united to Himself in our honour, ...¹

Bawai explains little further regarding the origin of both natures in the divine and the human natures found in Christ.

One is the messiah, adored by all in two Natures,² who as touching His godhead, is begotten of the father, without beginning, and before all ages; and, as touching His Manhood, was born of Mary, in the fulfilment of time, as body of union. His Godhead is not from the substance of His Father, but the Natures and *Qnoma* subsist in the one *Parsopa* of this one Filiation.....³

In the final stanza of this anthem Mar Bawai

1. Khudra Vol. I P. 118

Unfortunately Khudra does not state who is the author of the anthem. But *Kdam Wather* says so.

2. The Syriac word used for Natures in *Kiana* in singular and *Kiane* in plural.

3. *Khudra* Vol. I. p, 118

fore the worlds, from everlasting, He being truly God. He came to us in the fulfilment of time, took our body upon Him, and therewith redeemed us, He being truly Man.

He gave the power of walking to the lame, and members to the maimed, He being truly God. He slept on board the ship, He being Man. He calmed the sea He being God. He ascended the mount, He being Man

The children praised Him, He being God. The Pharisees envied Him, He being Man. He wrought miracles, He being God. The priests conspired against Him, He being Man.

He rent the Temple, He being God. He cried out from cross, He being Man. He cast darkness over the sun, He being God. He submitted to death, His body was embalmed and laid in a sepulchre hewn out of the rock, He being truly Man.¹

Khudra Vol. I p. 502 of. Badger, Vol, II p. 35 John Mason Neale gives an editorial note here "The following anthem is clearly derived in great measure, from the letter of S. Leo to S. Flavian, a curious instance of the adoption of the words of a Catholic Doctor by the Nestorians after their fall into heresy". Badger Vol. II p. 424 note 12.

3. PASSAGES FROM KHUDRA

The Book of Gazza though it is a prayer book, deals not only with biblical references, but also writes a brief historical treatise for the benefit of the worshippers so that they should understand what is true historical faith. The following passage is an example of it.

With all these proofs to establish the humanity of the Saviour, I am astounded at the tenets of the erring heretics: Manes, Marcion, and the worthless Simon deny (Christ's) body, and thereby deprive our race of salvation. Eutyches, also, who falsely asserted that the (Christ's) body descended from above, equally denies our body (i. e. that Christ's body was like our own). Eunomius and his followers denied the soul (of Christ); but the worst of all was Jacob (Baradeus) who makes the self-existent passible. This erring man maintains that there is but one nature, in Christ, and says that the self-existent became flesh, thereby destroying the co-equality of the Persons of the Trinity,

and inflicting a serious injury on mankind.¹

Then the passage speaks of Nestorius and his controversy.

After him (Jacob Baradeus) came the erroneous Chalcedonians, whose creed resembles his, since they believe that there are two Natures and one Person in Christ. And this creed is maintained by all the West by the Romans, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Copts,² the Melchites, and by most of the Georgians. This wicked party excommunicated Mar Nestorius, who are true, and who taught the truth in the Church.

The same passage proceeds to explain what is the true faith taught by Nestorius:

1. Badger Vol. II p. 38.

This historical section is not found in the *Khudra* printed in Trichur. The present writer has searched the two ancient manuscripts used for the printing of this *Khudra*, but could not find the passages cited.

It is an anachronism to speak of Nestorius and the Council of Chalcedon after Jacob Baradeus who lived in the 6th century. Perhaps he may have confused Jacob Baradeus with Cyril of Alexandria. Because Nestorians considered Manophysites as their main adversaries as they lived somewhat in the same geographical area. The Nestorians also considered Cyril as their main enemy. Hence this anachronism. The passage continues:

2. J. M. Neale points out that author has wrongly identified Copts as Chalcedonians. Badger Vol. II p. 424 Note 13.

He confessed two Natures and two *Qnome*¹ in Christ even as the disciples declared to all nations in their preaching and all nations received this doctrine which is well known in all the Churches of the East as it was preached and manifested by Mar Mari the Apostle.²

From the pen of the famous poet Khamees comes another hymn appointed to be read on the Feast of the Holy Nativity, found in *Gezza*. This hymn is an example of oriental exaggeration and poetic fancy. Therein we read:

"Ten thousand times and ten thousand glories uttered by the Church, the never-ending springs of the pouring forth of the Spirit, flow towards the dust unto Thee, Thou Ray of the Mysterious Orb, the Everlasting, the Son of the essence of Self-existence, who from virginity took a garment of humanity, and hid there into the effulgence of His Divinity!"³

In the same poem he further goes on:

The Begotten, the Highest, the Ancient of days, who has set us free, draw milk from the breast as do sucklings and in-

1. Badger uses the word Persons.

2. Badger Vol. II p. 39.

3. Badger Vol. II p. 39.

phants, was bound in swaddling clothes and was placed in a manger like a child of the poor and needy, although He is verily and indeed the King of Kings, to whom the highest worship is due. Crowds of simple and untutored shepherds surround the cave where He lay, and bow to Him in adoration. Legions of spiritual excellent, and adoring powers,.....the living chariots of the wonderful cherubim,.....the speaking wheels, with open eyes and replete with wisdom and intelligence, now stationary, now lifted up, myriads of seraphim, as quick as light, with out-stretched wings, whose it is to sing thrice Holy,the glorious, admirable, and awful company of exalted thrones,the company of those who keep watch over the kingdom of the Lord, all the beautiful armies, Lordships, dominions, invincible powers, archangels, angels, and messengers surround Ephraïma in nine circles, fly to and fro, ascend and descend as eagles, dance, rejoice, clap their hands and feet like children of freedom, sing and sound their trumpets on the day of the Nativity, and on their lyres praise the Child Born.....sing

the most exalted hallelujahs, thrice Holie.
 Psalms, glories and holy songs, unto
 God in the highest, increase of security
 and peace upon earth, and the descent
 of good-will and its continuance among
 men.....

The same poet comes to the point in the following
 lines:

.....From these things, then, let us
 rest assured that the Messiah is one in
 two Natures, and two Persons subsisting
 in one *Parsopa* of Filiation, since the
 Natures did not commingle, and in the
 like manner we believe of the Persons.
 The Son of the Father clothed Himself
 with Him of Mary, and was conceived in
 the womb.¹

Being aware of the possibility of the imputation of heresy the poet hastens to add. "But let no man filch a word from this, and wilfully pervert it by specious philosophy, so as to conclude that there are two sons".² The Nestorian writers are always aware of this charge brought against them. It is therefore that the poet repeats:

For there is one Son only, not a Son
and a Son
making two; but One Son, we repeat, as
it is most
proper to maintain, even as a man by
clothing
himself with a garment is not called two
men.¹

John Mason Neale in his editorial note on the above stanza comments "The flat downright heresy of this passage is well worthy notice".² To a Nestorian, such downright heresy is not noticeable because he is used to the language of emphasising the dual natures of Christ. To those who are not used to the Nestorian way of thinking it may be easy to detect the trace of heresy. Never the less to the poet, it has no "double-meaning or equivocation whatever; neither in what we have declared is there any folly or ignorance;" but, it "has been set forth worthily, rightly, truly, firmly and on a solid foundation...

1. *Ibid.*

2. Badger Vol. II P. 424 Note 14.

3. Badger Vol II P. 41.

Creed written by Abdisho in A. D. 1298. Quoted from Badger, Vol. II p. 50, Mar Abdisho wrote the famous book called *Marganeetha* or the Pearl. He also wrote the Nomo-Canon, the collection of Synodical Canons of the Church of the East. He is the last Nestorian theologian.

4. MAR ABDISHO

Abdisho the famous canonist and poet tried to draw up an orthodox Nestorian Creed around A. D. 1298. He writes:

And they believe of Christ that the eternal words, who is the wisdom of the exalted creator and called the son, and who is one of the three Persons as we have stated, dwelt in the human nature taken from the Virgin Mary, and united therewith. Hence the name of Christ has a double meaning with them, the Divinity and the Humanity, and hence they say that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man, One Lord.

Abdisho explains the nature of union in the same creed. Now union implies two or more things becoming one thing; either by mixture and confusion as the union of water with wine¹ by mingling or by honey with vinegar in (the drink called) *setinjebeen*; or by construction, as the union of wood with iron in the manu-

1. J. M. Neale adds the following note: It is curious to observe here how this Nestorian writer uses the very same kind of arguments that the Arians employed against the *Homousion*, namely the affixing an earthly sense to a spiritual expression and thus endeavouring to obtain a *reductio ad absurdum*.

facture of a door or a bed, or (a union) of the will and affections, as saith the Scripture, the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul
¹

After explaining various ways of union, the author states that the "Christians hold the doctrine of *The Union* in three different ways". The first, Abdisho says, is of the Jacobites who "believe that the union was of the Person and the Nature by mixture and confusion; so that the Eternal Word and the human nature taken from Mary became one Nature and one Person".²

The second group according to Abdisho is of the Melchites who "believe that the union was of the Person and not of the Nature - a union of construction and fabrication so that God the Word and the Man taken from Mary became two Natures and One Person"³ Then he explains the third group, which is his own, as follows:

The Nestorians believe that the Union was of anointment (the becoming Christ) and filiation, of dominion and power, - a union of will, design, affection, honour, *Parsopeita* and so that the Eternal Word

1. Quoted from Badger, Vol. II p. 50.

2. Badger, Vol. II. p. 50.

3. Badger, Vol II P. 50.

and the Man taken from Mary, two Natures, one eternal and the other temporal, and two Persons, one Divine and the other Human, became One Son, One Christ, in will, honour, design, affection, reverence and Parsopeita.¹

Mar Abdisho like Mar Babai is emphasizing the two distinct natures of Christ. He is showing the obvious parables from the life of Christ. Similar parables are difficult to be found in the prayers of the West Syrian Church. However, there are several prayers for Christmas and Holy weeks which contain the ideas of human birth and suffering of our Lord. Commenting on this fact V. C. Samuel observes "Obviously, there is no reduction of the manhood of Christ either in the Patristic or in the Liturgical tradition of the Syrian Church."

5. ANONYMOUS AUTHORS

Apart from Narsai, Bawai and Abdisho discussed in the forgone pages there were others, some anonymous, who tried to justify the christology of this Church. Professor Luise Abramowski of Bonn and Alan E. Goodman of Cambridge have recently published the facsimile of

1. *Ibid.* pp. 50-.

the most significant of these works with an English translation from a late nineteenth century transcript in the Cambridge University Library (Ms. Oriental 1319). This book entitled *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* is a compilation of excerpts, originating mostly from Nestorian classics of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries.¹ Sahadost, Isaac of Nineveh, Michael Malpana; Henanisho the monk, and others including some anonymous ones have contributed to this work which is described as "a kind of dogmatic textbook on Christology".²

For Nestorius it was difficult to understand how Christ can be true God and true man without having the nature as well as hypostasis of both God and man. In order to be identical with God and man in both natures and hypostases, it is important that there should be two natures and two hypostases. An anonymous Nestorian theologian puts this arguments in the following words:³

1. Luise Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman: *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*. Cambridge University Library MS. Oriental 1319, University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No: 18, Vol I Syriac Text No: 19 Vol. II English translation Cambridge: University Press, 1972.

2. On the flap cover of both volumes.

3. L. Abramowski and Goodman, A. E, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*. P 67.

"Christ the son of God, is he God in nature and man in nature and hypostasis or not? If he is see (there are) (169) two natures and two hypostasis without argument, and if (he is) not, which of them is without nature and without hypostasis? But if, while both are preserved in their natures and in their hypostases, one nature and one hypostasis has arisen from them, let them tell us - this one nature and one hypostasis has it consubstantial (beings) or not? If it has, let them show (us) which is the other hypostasis which is constituted of the godhead and the manhood; and if not, it is alone in its kind, and it is consubstantial with God or with us, Finis.

This point is again discussed in the refutation of the second anathema of Cyril which states:¹

Whoever does not confess that the word which is from God the Father is united hypostatically to the flesh, and that Christ is one with his flesh that is to say the same one at the same time God and man - let him be anathema.

1. Abramowski and Goodman, *op. cit.* p. 76.

The anonymous refutation quotes Ambrose saying:¹

From where, O deniers, have you (evidence) that the body is consubstantial with the godhead (133) of the Word? The holy scriptures say that God was in a human body, and our fathers who were at Nicea have called not the body but the Son, consubstantial with the Father.

In refuting the third anathema, the same anonymous source states.²

"But we, what shall we say? Whoever divides our Lord into two parsopa, speaks of him who was begotten of the Father before (134) the worlds as the one, and of him who was (born) of Mary as the other and (does) not (say) "One is the Son who is known in the two natures" because of the unutterable unity, denies the truth. But the Egyptian in his presumption of the confirmation of this chapter, anathematized first of all Athanasius, and then Gregory of Nyssa. And when he had acted presumptuously towards those things which are incomprehensible, he instructed others in them".

(1) Abramowski and Goodman, *op. cit.* p.p. 76-7 (2) Ibid p. 77.

Nestorius raises the question of the distinction between nature and hypostasis. He answers this question as follows:

Nature means what is common as one might say 'all mankind'. But 'hypostasis' is what each one of us is, signifies that (which is) in accordance with that which is deposited and set in motion. Now the same (person) is nature and hypostasis, because the former is, as I have said that which is common, while the latter, in that it signifies (the individual) gives the cognition of each one of us. This together with many other things the blessed Theodore, also speaks of in the 18th book against Eunomius, (180) as follows.

Prosopon is used in a twofold way; for either it signifies the hypostasis, and that which each one of us is, or it is conferred upon honour, greatness and worship; for example: 'Paul' and 'Peter' signify the hypostasis and the prosopon of each one of them but the prosopon of our Lord Christ means honour greatness and worship. For because God the Word was revealed in manhood, he was causing the glory of his 'hypostasis' to

cleave to the visible one; and for this reason, 'prosopon of Christ' declares it (se. the prosopon) to be (a prosopon) of honour not of the ousia of the two natures.¹

It is not correct to state that the Nestorian fathers are in agreement with the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon. Though in times some scholars have argued that the Nestorians do not specifically condemn Chalcedonian formula of Christology, the tendency in the past had been to expose the "heresy" of Chalcedon too. Mar Isaac, bishop of Niniveh, is a true example of the general antagonism towards the Council of Chalcedon of A. D. 451. He writes.

About those of the orthodox who had agreed to the confession, mixed with impiety, of the synod of Chalcedon. Some, though recognising God the Word perfect in his hypostasis, and the nature of the manhood, perfect in its hypostasis, and confessing Christ, passible and impassible. distinct and not confused, in order that they might avoid being accused of the confession of the duality of sons, and the duality of worship in their confession, shun in a

1. Abramowski and Goodman, *op. cit.* pp. 106-7.

wicked manner the confession of the duality of the hypostasis. And in place of one prosopon of Christ in his two natures, they postulate one hypostasis in Christ from the two natures. And though properly confessing the distinction of the properties of the natures, and their continuous preservation, they are wronging the rectitude of the confession by taking part in the impiety of the union of the hypostasis with which they are in the end joined, assenting in this to all the heresies of old.¹

Michael Malpana attacks the 'hypostatic union' saying.

Let us now speak also against the confused union of the impious Cyril. The Word in hypostasis is infinite, but man in hypostasis is finite. He therefore who speaks of the hypostatic union of God and man, either brings God down to the finity of man, or raises man to the infinity of God. Since neither this nor that will be, it is impossible for God to be united hypostatically to man.²

According to the Nestorian theologians a very important question is 'In what hypostasis

1. Abramowski and Goodman *op. cit.* pp. 37—38.

2. *Ibid.* p. 61.

did hypostatic union take place''?'¹ Michael Malpana states ''you are unable to establish the hypostatic and natural union, and you are unwilling to accept the voluntary (union)''.²

6. CRUCIAL CHRISTOLOGICAL TERMS.

Ever since the Church of the East accepted the Nicene Creed in the Synod of 410 A. D.³ during the reign of Mar Isaac, Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, she had the misfortune of developing her theology on Greek thought alien to their Semitic thinking. So far, the Church had the theology of *Afraat* to build on, but now began to think in Greek terms. Wigram describes this as David in Saul's armour. Saul's armour may be excellent for Saul, but not for David.⁴

A short discussion on the Syriac terms, *Kyana*, *Qnoma* and *Parsopa* seems to be inevitable at this point, as the Christology of the Church of the East is defined as one *Parsopa*, two *Qnome* and two *Kyane*. All the arguments advanced by the Fathers of this church were to illustrate this great Christological formula. These words are liable to be easily misunderstood and cleverly misinterpreted.

1. *Ibid* p. 62.

2. *Ibid*.

3. This Synod met at Seleucia on Epiphany, 410 A. D.

4. Wigram; *op. cit*; p. 266.

If Nestorius had difficulty in interpreting his Antiochene thought in terms and expressions understandable to those outside the influence of the 'School of Antioch', the Church of the East had far greater difficulty in explaining their Syriac terms in expressions understandable to the Western mind. Bethune Baker observes that these terms have played a part in Syriac theological discussions parallel to that played in Greek by *ousia*, *phusis*, *prosopon* and *hupastasis*.¹ The following short discussion is intended to clear away some of the misconceptions concerning the Christology of the Church of the East before we look at some of its great theologians.

a. *Kyane*.

The word *Kyana*² can be translated into Greek as *phusis* and to English as 'nature'. The author of the Appendix of Bethune Baker's book points out that there are only two places³ in New Testament where *Kyana* is not translated as *phusis*.

Some Scholars find a wider application for the word *Kyana* than the Greek *phusis*. Saint Ephraim, e. g. uses the word *Kyana*, to mean *ithya* (ܐܝܬܝܐ) which means 'Being'. He speaks of a *Kyana*, with a *Kyana* meaning "Being

1. Bethune Baker; *Nestorius and his Teaching*, Cambridge: University Press, 1908, p. 212.

2. *Kyane* is the plural of *Kyana*

3. 1 Cor. 15: 38 and James 1: 21.

with nature". He uses *ithya* only to God; for other beings he uses the word *Kyana*. The author of the Appendix quoted above writes:

Where we should speak of material things as "Substances", a Syrian would call them "natures". Thus "Oil is a liquid substance" would be oil is a liquid nature.¹

Solomon of al-Basra,² a writer of the Church of the East, explains:

Darkness is a *Kyana* which subsists of itself: and if it were not a *Kyana* it would not have been numbered with the seven *Kyana* which were created in the beginning in silence. Others say that darkness is not a *Kyana* that subsists of itself, but the shadow of bodies.³

Out of the three terms discussed in this section, *kyana* is the least controversial. In the later discussion of the Christology of the Church of the East, only the other two words were liable to be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

b. *Qnome*

Qnoma is translated into Greek as *hupostasis*. The English word *hypostasis* is a

1. Bethune Baker: *op cit*; p. 218.

2. He lived early in the thirteenth century.

3. *Book of the Bee*, ed. Budge; p. 16.

(quoted from Bethune Baker, *op, cit.* p. 218)

transliteration of the Greek word. Many of the supporters of Nestorius at present hold that there is no adequate equivalent to this word in other languages. Whatever words we may find in other languages, they fail to convey the exact meaning of the original Syriac idea. Even in Syriac this word has been used in different senses.

The Peshitta New Testament uses *Qnoma* to mean 'self' with one exception of Hebrews X:1. In the Gospel of Matthew, V:34, in the Old Syriac Manuscript this word is used to mean the Greek *olos*. Aphratt, the Syrian author, uses this word to mean "self" and Ephraim uses it to mean "subsistency" or "reality". Mar Bawai,¹ another Syrian theologian defines it as being "the specialization of *ousia*", the set of natural characteristics, as they exist in the individual:²

According to Ishoyahh III of the seventh century, "*Qnoma* has the meaning of "naturehood" *kianutha*,³ and that meaning only. It stands steadfast in the simple expression of that essential meaning, and all that we mean by "naturehood" is demonstrably included in it

1. For the teaching of Mar Bawai, see pp. 77—81.

2. Wigram; *op cit*; p. 283.

3. *Kianutha* comes from the word *Kiana*.

it does not admit of subtraction from or addition to, its meaning"¹.

The Syriac Dictionary of J. Payne Smith defines *Qnoma* as hypostasis, substance, actual existence, person, individual, individual self etc. She, however, states that Nestorians distinguish between the *Qnoma* (Hypostasis) and *Parsopa. prosopon*. She further translates the Nestorian Christological formula as "Christ is two natures and two *Qnumi* united in the person of the Son".²

Bethune Baker and Wigram think that *autos* may almost invariably be the Greek rendering of it. Sometimes *Qnoma* and *ithutha* are used as synonyms in Syriac. The Syrians spoke of three *Qnoma* in trinity which corresponds to a well known use of *hupostasis* in Greek. The Church of the East teaches three *Qnome* in the Trinity and two *Qnome* in Christ; three *Parsope* in the Trinity, and one *Parsopa* in Christ. Western scholars may find an inconsistency here. But we have to understand the distinction they make when they speak of the *Qnoma* of Christ which is not exactly as the *Qnome* of Trinity. Mar Avdeesho of the 14th

1. Isho—Yabhi; Letters. 2, 6, p. 131 Duval (quoted from Wigram; *op. cit*; pp; 284-5) See also Budge: *Book of Governors*, Vol. II, p. CXXXIX
2. J. Payne Smith: *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1957, p. 510.

century¹ denies any ideas of "four persons" in the Trinity; although it may look as if the teaching of two *Qnome* in Christ and three *Qnome* in the Trinity logically leads to the idea of "four persons" in God. He states:

If we maintained two Sons in Christ, the charge might justly be brought against us; because the Father and Spirit, with these two Sons, would make four persons. But seeing that we confess but one Son, one Christ, one *Parsopa*, we have no fear of being guilty of blasphemy.²

Therefore to make the distinction between *Qnoma* and person clear in the English language "concrete nature" is here translated with the word *Qnoma*, when it is used in relation to the *Qnoma* of Christ.

c. *Parsopa*

Parsopa is the Syriac word for the Greek *Prosopon*. The original meaning is face, visage, countenance. It is also used in classical Greek as an equivalent to mask, and so for a *dramatic part* or character. Other classical usage are front, outward appearance and beauty. When used to

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1. A detailed discussion of his theology is given earlier in this chapter.
 2. Avdeesho: *Marganeetha*, Part III, Ch. VII quoted from George P. Badger: *Nestorians and their Rituals*, London: Joseph Masters, 1852, p. 402.

denote a person, it is always simply the person and not the inner *ego* or personality.

In the New Testament and other earlier writings this word is translated always in the sense of face or appearance with the possible exception of Jude 1:6. According to Wigram, *Parsopa* is used by the Assyrians to mean "real presence" which is nearer to 'person' than "appearance"¹

Mar Isho Yabh III, Patriarch of the Church of the East in 8th century, writes to a friend:

For *Parsopa*, O Brother, is that which distinguishes the *Qnoma*, and it has a great variety of ideas connected with it and has a ready aptitude for being bartered and exchanged, and, as I have said, it contains a complex idea.²

Nestorius himself asks Cyril, "Dost thou wish to regard a hypostasis as a *prospan*"³. This must have been a starting point for reconciliation. Isho—Yabh, the Patriarch of the Church of the East, writes to Sahdona, denying vehemently the possibility of identifying *Parsopa* with *Qnoma*. Ishoyabh writes:

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1. Wigram; *op. cit.* p. 279.
 2. Quoted from Bethune Baker; *op. cit.* p. 230
 3. Nestorius; *Bezaar*; *op. cit.* p. 156

When you use a word, you cannot make it mean just what you want it to, and these two terms have special meanings of their own*Parsopa*, I grant, can be interpreted in various ways, but *Qnoma* is a word of one interpretation only, namely 'naturehood' (*kianutha*), and it sticks to the simple expression of its essential meanings.

You say *Parsopa* and *Qnoma* are synonyms. Much more so are *Qnoma* and *Kiana*, and this idea of yours thrusts you straight into the pit of (Monophysite) heresy.¹

The statements that the Nestorian christological formula is "two natures, two persons, one *Parsopa*" is inaccurate and misleading. In this thesis, at any rate, as *Qnoma* has found a better and more satisfactory word than 'Person' the Syriac word *Parsopa* is consistently translated as nothing but 'person'.

P. T. Camelot observes in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

While distinguishing between the natures Nestorius still affirmed their union. He would not consent to speak of "two

1. Isho - Yabhi; Letter. 7. p, 131. Quoted from Wigram; *op. cit.* p. 305.

sons'': but he spoke of a conjunction, a voluntary union, or one of accommodation, and gave the impression of believing in a union in the psychological or moral order rather than that of a metaphysical nature. This would be an extrimistic union like that of a temple with the divinity inhabiting it, of clothing and the weaver, or of an instrument (organon) and the user. Certain of these examples, such as that of the temple, are found in the Scriptures or in tradition.¹

E. Summary

From the former sections of this chapter it is evident that the christology of the Church of the East is in line with the Christology of the "three Greek Doctors", which is a sufficient justification for the veneration of them in the Church of the East.

This Church is opposed to Cyril and Severus because of her opposition to the teaching of 'One Incarnate Nature' and also because of the

1. P. T. Camelot "Nestorianism", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* Newyork, Me Graw Hill Book Company 1967, p. 347.

personal enmity of Cyril-against Nestorius.¹ The Christology of Narsai, Bawai, Avdeesho, *et al* is the affirmation of a single Person of Jesus Christ in two hypostases and two natures. It has two emphases: One is to affirm the divinity of Christ against Arian heretics and the second is to present to mankind a Christ who suffered as a human being; thereby showing an example for all the mankind.

The Christology of the Church of the East, therefore, neither teaches the duality of the Person of Christ, nor is it a denial of the divinity of Christ. According to custom, though not by obligation, when the believers enter the Churches, they advance to kiss the cross placed on the table in the east end of the Church, repeating this confession: 'O Lord, we worship thy divinity, and thy humanity without dividing them'.

P. T. Camelot says in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

Nestorius affirmed the close union and conjunction of a concrete human nature with the divinity, and the termination of that union is the *Prosopon* or person of

1. An Anglican missionary working among the Assyrians, in the beginning of this century, was surprised to 'discover' what he calls 'a most wildly unhistorical account' of the Council of Ephesus'. (Archbishops' Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper, London: S. P. C. K. Jan. 1913)

Christ, God and man. This involves a central point of difference between the theology of Nestorius and that of Cyril as well as that which the Church made its own at the council of Ephesus and in subsequent tradition.¹

The present day attitude of the Roman Catholics towards Nestorianism seems to be sympathetic rather than antagonistic. The account of the Council of Ephesus of 431 A. D. in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* is instance enough in evidence of the above statement. About Nestorius it writes:

Nestorius, as well as Theodore, repeatedly insisted that he did not admit two Christs or two Sons and he frequently asserted the unity of the *prosopon*.²

In spite of all the adverse criticism attempting to show that Nestorius taught two Christs, the above author affirms: "It will probably be only just to Nestorius to admit that he fully intended to safeguard the unity of subject in Christ."³

The Church of the East, isolated as it was from western Christendom, was free from any

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1. P. T. Camelot, "Nestorianism," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* New York. Mc Graw Hill Book Company, 1967, Vol. X. p. 347.
 2. John Chapman: "Nestorius", *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 10 New York: The Gilmary Society, 1913, p. 756.
 3. *Ibid.* p. 757.

direct hostility as on the part of the Church of the West. The first Assyrian to come to the Western Church after the Christological controversy was Aba¹ around the year 534. He went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, visiting Egypt, Greece and Constantinople, and it is recorded that he stayed at Constantinople, for an year along with his teacher Thomas from Edessa. Both these Assyrians spent their time in teaching until the accession of the Monophysite Patriarch Anthimus in 535.

P. T. Camelot writes

There is no doubt that Nestorius used the term *prosopon* (which meant originally the mark or representation of a person in the Greek theater) in expressions that recall the "Communication of idioms," and he used formulas that Cyril might have employed; but the metaphysical foundation behind this use of "nature" and person was insufficient to protect the personal unity represented by the "*Word Incarnate*".

II According to E. Amann, Nestorius could not imagine a nature without its own subsistence, or which was not a concrete hypostasis or personality. He did not

1. Aba was a convert from Zoroastrianism who later became the Patriarch of the Church of the East.

clearly comprehend the distinction between the concept of real existence and that of independent subsistence. According to G. L. Prestige, Nestorius was not able to reduce to a unique clearly differentiated person the two natures of Christ, which he nevertheless distinguished with such admirable realism.¹

It is believed that these two "Nestorians" must have received communion at Constantinople.² Aba, who was a good theologian, undoubtedly explained the christology of the Church of the East to his hosts at Constantinople. If they were allowed to work in Constantinople, it could reasonably be argued that in the sixth century the Western Church did not condemn the Church of the East.³

Another incident from the same century supports our contention that the Church of the East was not considered Nestorian at that time. In 585 A. D., the Patriarch of the Church of the East, Isho Yab' I (d. 596), sent an embassy to the Emperor Maurice during the wars of Persians with the Romans. When the Emperor asked the

1. P. T. Camelot "Nestorianism" NCE Vol, X, *op. cit.* p. 347.

2. See Wigram; *op. cit.* p. 185.

3. The statement that Aba was expelled from Constantinople for refusing to anathematise Theodore of Mopsuestia, is unsupported by historical evidence, wherefore Wigram also ignores it. (Wigram *op. cit.*, p. 185 footnote)

Patriarch "what is your faith in the Persian Church? Since the time of the Council Chalcedon, we have heard nothing whatever about you". Ishoyabh wrote a confession and submitted to the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch which was accepted by them as absolutely orthodox.¹ It was at this time that the Church of the East first heard of the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who was considered as the greatest 'Interpreter' of them.²

P. T. Camelot thinks that the Church of Persia officially adopted Nestorianism in the Synod of Seleucia in 486. He further states.

The Nestorianism of the Persian Church was greatly strengthened at the synod of 672 when it adopted the heterodox principles of the catholicos, Babai the Great: two natures, two *hypostaseis*, a sole *prosopon*; the term *theotokos* was formally excluded.³

In 1267 Rabban Sauma, a monk of the Church of the East, visited Rome, an incident of great significance to our study. Christopher Dawson calls the experiences of this monk a document of

1. *Ibid.* pp. 215-6.

2. Both these instances are included here to show the Catholic attitudes towards the Church of the East. Though they are related with Constantinople, there was no separation of the Church of Constantinople from the Church of Rome prior to 1054 A. D.

3. P. T. Camelot. P. 347.

incomparable importance for the religious history of the Mongol empire and its relations with Western Christendom.¹

Rabban Sauma celebrated the Liturgy at Gascony, and Rome. More significant than this was the fact that Sauma was allowed to celebrate the East Syrian Liturgy in Rome.

Moreover, he received communion from the Pope.² Fortescue remarks that this is the only time a Nestorian has ever received communion from the Pope. If the christology of the church of the East was defective, the Pope would not have allowed Sauma to communicate.

Today the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards the Church of the East is one of sympathy. One Roman Catholic author concludes his account of the Church of the East in glorious terms with the following statement: "That they have kept the christian faith for thirteen centuries of tragic isolation gives them a right to all our respect and affection".³ He is only asking them to "come out of that other fold back to the one flock." "Only to do that they must accept Ephesus and call the mother of their Lord by her right name", he adds.⁴ Like many other Roman Catholics, Fortescue thinks that schism, rather than heresy, is the main error of the Church of the East.

1. Christopher Dawson; *The Mongol Mission*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1955, P. XXIX.

2. Nicholas IV (1288 - 1292)

3. Fortescue: *op. cit.* p. 158.

4. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

MARIOLOGY

Though the Church of the East has not developed a separate doctrine of Mariology, many of the prayers pay respect to Mary. St. Ephrem, the famous Syrian poet of the 4th century, has several references to Mary. The title of Mary was a crucial question in the christological controversy between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius. There is suspicion in the minds of many that the Church of the East is not giving sufficient respect to Mary because of its refusal to use the title of Theotokos. The following passages from the liturgical works of this Church will help us understand the high esteem with which Mary is held in the Church of the East.

For a clearer understanding of Mariology let us discuss it under the following seven headings:

- A. Mary's sinlessness
- B. Perpetual Virginity

- C. Mary's assumption to heaven
- D. Intercession to Mary
- E. Reverence to Mary
- F. The title 'Mother of God'
- G. Summary

A. Mary's sinlessness

The Church of the East calls the Blessed Virgin "pure". The Syriac word *Nakhptha* is often used as an adjective to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Prayers.¹ This does not necessarily mean that she is without sin from her birth. She was an ordinary woman like other women of her time. She was an ordinary human being. It is not stated positively that she committed any sin. Never the less, the Church of the East does not subscribe to the view taken by the Roman Catholic Church that Virgin Mary had an Immaculate Conception. The blessed Mary was found full of grace at annunciation by the angel Gabriel.² It looks more reasonable to refer the word "pure" from the moment of annunciation until her death. Since the fathers of this Church have not discussed any dogma for immaculate conception of Mary we do not have specific reference to prove or disprove this idea. Never the less, the logical inference one can draw from the books is in support of the view stated above

1. Khudra, *op. cit.* Vol. I. p. 38 (Syriac number)
p. 433 (Roman number)

2. Luke 1: 28 f.

i, e., she was sinless as a result of the sanctification at the time of the annunciation.¹

In the martyr's anthem of Wednesday evening we read: 'Thy body, O Chaste Virgin is to us treasure of blessing and its abundant help enriches the world'.² Here the word used for 'chaste' is *Nakhptha* which means chaste or pure. The body of the Virgin is referred to as pure. This may mean that she was sinless.

In a famous song written by Geevarghese *Warda* appointed to be read for any of the Memorials of Virgin Mary, we read about the Blessed Virgin as follows:

Who can mentally conceive, or speak and declare with his mouth, of that *chaste, pure, holy, sanctified, unknown (by man) and unmarried one ever Virgin, who was sanctified from the womb, and chosen from the belly, to be abode, dwelling place, habilitation, temple, resting place, tower, palaces, and throne, for the ever living God! The mouths of men are insufficient*

1. This is the general orthodox tradition. They have not formulated the dogma of immaculate conception. They consider the Blessed Virgin sinless from the time she received grace, i. e., annunciation.

2. *Khudra* Vol. I. p. 433 (Roman numbers)

to praise the Mother of the Lord of Angels of men.¹

This poem of Warda in a beautiful poetic language describes the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Chaste, pure, holy, sanctified" etc. which is to prove the sinlessness of the Blessed Mother of our Lord. One cannot, however, ignore the expressions such as "who was sanctified from the womb and chosen from the belly to be an abode"....." If the poet meant that Mary was sanctified from the womb it leads to the Roman Catholic belief of immaculate conception. But other writings of the Nestorian fathers do not go that far. It is true that there is no mention of Mary's sin before the angel Gabriel appeared to her in the Nestorian writings. She was pure and chaste and that must be the reason why she was chosen by God to be the Mother of Christ.

Mary is usually referred to as the *Mbarakhtha*² (Blessed) on the Friday's evening prayer in the martyrs' anthem the following stanza sings:

Blessed art, thou holy Virgin.
Blessed art thou, Mother of Christ.
Blessed art thou, whom all generations.
And races call blessed.

1. Badger. Vol. II, pp. 51-2.

2. Khudra Vol. I p. 12 (Syriac numbering)

Blessed art thou in whom the Father was
well pleased.

Blessed art thou in whom the Firstborn
dwelt

Blessed art thou whom the holy ghost
made to conquer in creation.¹

About Mary's blameless character poet Warda praises: "Her eyes looked not upon a man, neither did she listen to his words. Her lips did not utter words either to boy or girl"² The same poem describes her as modest and a "pure person".³

B. Perpetual Virginity:

About the Virginity of the Blessed Mother of our Lord most churches agree that Mary was a Virgin when she gave birth to Jesus. As for her ever-Virginity, most of the Protestants seem to think that she consummated marriage with Joseph after the birth of Jesus.⁴ The Catholics and the Orthodox generally think that she remained Virgin for ever. If she had other children, it is only pertinent to ask why Jesus should ask John to take care of Mary at the time of His

1. *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 444 (Roman numbers) Here the word is used as *Thuva* instead of *Mbarakhtha*. Both words mean blessed.

2. Cf. Badger, *op. cit.* Vol. II p. 52.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Luke 8: 10, 20.

crucifixion.¹ According to the Catholic and Orthodox mind the mother of our Lord should be different from other women, at least after bearing Christ, the Son of God. To think of her consummating a normal marriage with Joseph brings down the holy image of the Blessed Mother. The following passage of Warda declares in unequivocal terms the ever virginity of Mary.

Blessed are thou, O Virgin, who went affianced *but never married*, and *never known of man*. Blessed art thou, O Woman, who hadst a Son and yet whose virginity was never losed by man. Blessed art thou, mother..... ..Blessed art thou, O Virgin, who didst attain old age without losing thy Virginity. Blessed art thou, *O Child-bearing Virgin*, who didst bring forth without BEING UNLOSED OR Corrupted".²

About Virgin Mary the poem in *Khudra* says:

A daughter of man, the chaste *Virgin*, became as a haven of safety to the rational vessel tossed about in the tempestuous sea, so that hence forth the winds of error are powerless to drive it hither

1. John 19: 26 27.

2. Badger, Vol. II, p. 56.

and thither, nor can the tumultuous waves, raised by Satan, cause trouble to its rovers, now that the true Jewel has been brought up by the power of the Almighty arm of God, enclosed in the shell of the chaste Virgin, companionship of a human body, but without any (conjugal) intercourse, open upon the shore of the cave of the Bethlehem, the rivulet of which is small.¹

In the Hymns of the Nativity, Hymn No. VII St. Ephrem sings.

A wonder is Thy Mother. The Lord entered her, and became a servant; the word entered her, and became silent within her, thunder entered her, and his voice was still, the shepherd of all entered her; He became a Lamb in her, and came for the bleating.²

About virginity, St. Ephrem sings as the Virgin Mother to her child.

The son of the Most High came and dwelt in me, and I became His Mother, and as by a second birth I brought Him forth, so did he bring me forth by the second birth, because He put His Mother's

1. Badger. Vol. II. P. 42. *Khudra*. Vol. 1 I. P.

2. N. P. N. F. Second Series Vol. I. VIII. Part II P. 242.

garments on she, clothed her body with His glory.

Tamar, who was of the house of David, Amnon put to shame; and virginity fell and perished from them both. My pearl is not lost: in Thy treasury it is stored, because Thou hast put it on.¹

It also must be stated that the word *Bthultha* in Syriac means Virgin as well as maiden². This problem in Isaiah³ has created a confusion among some Protestant scholars in accepting the Virgin birth of Jesus. According to them Isaiah has prophesied that a maiden will give birth and not specifically an unmarried woman. Among the eastern churches, however, the ambiguity of the meaning of the Syriac word *Bthultha* has not been a problem. The word has always been taken to mean Virgin. Warda, the poet sang "Blessed art thou, since Isaiah praised thee, calling thee a virgin, and thy son, God"⁴. The other statements about Saint Mary has made it clear beyond doubt that she is Virgin and ever-Virgin.

About Virgin Birth there is an interesting passage in *Khamees*, appointed to be read on the Feast of the Holy Nativity.

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1. *Ibid.* Hymn XI p. 245
 2. J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, P. 57.
 3. Isaiah 7: 14.
 4. *Khudra* Vol. I. Cf. Badger *Op. Cit* Vol II. p. 65.

Hitherto the law of nature was in force but in the appearance of the Saviour from a virgin, the law of birth from (conjugal) union was abrogated; and the mind that would comprehend how this was must lose itself in the inquiry¹.

C. Mary's Assumption to Heaven:

The bodily assumption of Mary is a 20th century dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, it is unnecessary to search for such a dogma in the Church of the East which did not have any theological writings or synodical pronouncements at least for 600 years. This Church like all Orthodox and Catholic Churches observed the feast of "falling asleep" of virgin Mary.

The Church of the East and some other Orthodox Churches which still follow the Julian Calendar observe this feast on 28th August, while those who follow the Gregorian Calendar observe it on August 15th.

This festival is called "*Shunaya*" of virgin Mary. Unfortunately the meaning of this word is ambiguous. The Syriac Dictionary gives the meaning as follows²

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1. Badger, *Op Cit* Vol II p. 44 (1) This prayer is not found in the Khudra printed in Trichur. It is not used for the Feast of the Holy Nativity.
 2. J. Payne Smith. A Compendious Syriac Dictionary, *op. cit.* p. 566.

- a) Change, changing, transition, vicissitudes.
- b) removal, migration, departure esp. from this life; the festival of the Assumption of the B. V. M; transmigration.
- c) translation from one see to another; of relics.
- d) defection.

Here the meaning given in b) "removal, migration, departure esp. from this life" is applicable. Departure from this life does not specifically mean death. This is precisely the problem. Was the blessed virgin Mary departed from this life like Elijah and Enoch? The word *Shunaya* will remain a problem. Because as the same section in the Dictionary states the *Ida d' Shunaya* means "Festival of the Assumption of the B. V. M." The Church of the East does not translate *Shunaya* into English as the assumption. The Syriac English Calendar translates it as death of Virgin Mary¹.

The hymn of poet Warda appointed to be read on the Memorials of Virgin Mary. throws light on what the popular belief is about death of Mary.

The sick and afflicted called upon her name and were healed, and when she rested (died) her prayers were a tower

1. Syriac English Calendar 1972. - Mar Narsai Press. Months of August - September.

of help to all the distressed. The Jews however, that generation of vipers wished to burn her body, and collected heaps of fuel around the abode of the Virgin; but are they kindled it a fire issued therefrom and consumed them so their priests and scribes were burnt as were also the sons of Aaron. The hair of their chiefs were burnt and their hanging locks were singed. But the Virgin came forth, and fled away in a cloud.....¹

On the other hand it is true that her tomb is not known. So is the case with Moses. The absence of tomb does not lead us into a positive conclusion that the Virgin Mary was bodily assumed into heaven. Thus in the Church of the East the bodily assumption of Mary remains only as a mere assumption.

D. Intercession to Mary:

This church ask the intercession of Virgin Mary. It is in the general context of the intercession of the saints. Blessed Virgin is given a place just above other saints and martyrs. When we examine the prayers and anthems we come across the prominent place occupied by the Blessed Virgin.

1. Badger. *Op. Cit.* Vol. II p. 55.

In the anthems *Onyatha* of the evening prayers: the following prayers are relevant on our point of discussion. It is interesting to note that these anthems on Mary always come with the saying "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and Holy Ghost."

On second Monday we read:¹

By the prayer of Mary who bore thee and John who haptized thee.....keep O our Lord, our land and them that dwell in it.

On the first Tuesday we read:²

May the prayer of the Virgin, Mary the Mother of Christ. Be a wall to us. And keep us from the Evil one.

On the second Tuesday we read:³

A great refuge is the holy Virgin. To the faithful who always ask her prayers. By the strength of her prayer may our assembly be blessed. And the church be made fruitful in peace and concord.

On the first Thursday we read:

O Mary, holy Virgin, Mother of Jesus our Saviour, Beseech and beg for mercy. For sinners, that they be not destroyed. For

1. *Khudra* Vol. I p. The evening and morning prayers divided into two weeks. The *Kadmaya* (first) and *Khraya* (other, or second)

2. *Khudra* Vol. I. p.

3. *Khudra* Vol. I. p.

in thy prayers they take refuge. May thy prayer be a wall to us. In this world and in that to come.¹

From the above four anthems made clear that the Church of the East takes refuge in the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are asking her to intercede for the people to Christ and never to grant the requests of the people.

In the anthem of Sunday night we read as follows:

And let all the people say Amen and Amen. O Mary, the holy Virgin, Mother of Jesus our Saviour. Beseech with us of Christ, that he make his peace to dwell among us. And keep us from harm night and by day.²

The phrase "beseech with us" is important. It is bringing Mary more down to human level of beseeching *With* the worshippers rather than beseeching for the worshippers. The Roman Catholic concept co-Redemptrix is unknown in the Church of the East.

It must be stated that though the Church of the East requests the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, they do not have the popular prayer "Hail Mary....." which is used in Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

1. Khudra Vol. I. p. 23.

2. Ibid.

The prayers and intercessions are found particularly on the evening and morning prayers of "the memorial of the Blessed Saint Mary" which cover thirty printed pages in the *Khudra*¹. There is also a direction in the *Khudra* that for the Memorial in Winter² the Kudasha (Liturgy) of the interpreter³ should be used⁴.

The priestly prayer on the Memorial of St. Mary is as follows:⁵

May the prayer, O my Lord, of the holy Virgin and the request of the Blessed Mother, and the beseeching and entreating of her who is full of grace, St. Mary the Blessed be with us and among us, at all seasons and times, Lord of all, etc.

During the evening prayer of first Wednesday they sing: O Mary who didst bear the medicine of life to the children of Adam. By the petition may we find mercies in the day of the quickening⁶.

In the prayer of second Wednesday there is an anthem as follows:⁷

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1. *Khudra* Vol. I. p p. 585-615 (Syriac numbering)
 2. Winter refers to the Memorial Day in January.
 3. 'Interpreter' refers to the Theodore of Mopsuestia.
 4. *Khudra* Vol. I p. 615 (Syriac numbering)
 5. *Khudra* Vol. I p. 82 (Syriac numbering)
 6. *Khudra* Vol. I p. 20 (Syriac numbering)
 7. *Ibid.* p. 38 (Syriac numbering)

Under the wings of thy prayers O pure Mary, we always take shelter. And may they stand before us at all times. And in them may we find compassion and mercies in the day of judgement.

In the martyrs' anthem for Friday morning the fourth stanza from the end that is¹.

*The Virgin that be her fellow shall be
aa after her* O Virgin of the ages, Mary the
blessed mother beseech thy Son. To cause
his peace to dwell in this temple. In which
the day of my memorial is celebrated with
processions. And to cause the right hand
of his mercies to overshadow it as the
house of Airam. That all who are afflicted
and distressed. From him may receive
help.

It is important to note in the above passage the last line which reads "from him may receive help". The help comes not from the Virgin to whom the worshippers beseech but from her son to whom the prayers and supplications are made.

1. *Khudra* Vol. I, p. 447 (Common to all three volumes)

The first line in this quotation is underlined because it is printed in red in the *Khudra*,

3. REVERENCE to Mary:

The Church of the East pays great respect and reverence to Mary. But they do not indulge in Mariolatry, i. e., worship of Mary. They do not use any statues or even photos of the Blessed Mother¹. This does not mean that they do not give her the proper place of honour due to the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The anthem of the second Thursday of evening prayer reads: 'On the holy altar let there be a memorial of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ.'²

This anthem is also used in every Holy Qurbana service. This is the first anthem the celebrant sings after the chalice and paten are brought and placed in the centre of the altar during the middle of the Holy Ourbana service.

The same anthem in Syriac has been inscribed on the arch of altar in *estrangelo* character. The three festivals are observed for Virgin Mary. Her birth on September 21 and death on August 28 and the annunciation by angel Gabriel in January³. Moreover a fifteen day fast (abstinence from milk, egg, fish, butter, meat etc.....) is observed

1. The tradition of this Church has been against all images even crucifix.

2. Khudra. Vol. 1 p. 40 (Syriac numbering)

3. This Memorial is not on a fixed date. It is the second Friday after Christmas, which is on January 7th. The date will be between 14 and 21 January. cf *Khudra* Vol. I. p. 585 (Syriac numbering)

prior to the Memorial of Mary on August 2^d. A Church which respects the Blessed Virgin Mary indeed does not differ from other Orthodox churches, whether Greek or Oriental, except in the use of the title *Theotokos* (Mother of God or bearer of God)

Poet Warda who wrote long after the Nestorian controversy tries to find that even psalms are appropriate to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Describing about the Virgin Mary, the poet Warda refers to the various psalms:

Twenty two psalms of David are appropriate to her. The 1st declares her perfection and purity; the 3rd, the persecutions which She underwent, the 4th, her quietness; the 15th the malice which was borne towards her; the 15th her righteousness; the 16th the guard which was kept over her; the 17th her integrity; the 23rd her good educationand psalm 138th how the right hand of the Lord resulted on her¹.

The first stanza of the second anthem of Wednesday evening is giving reverence to Mary who is the temple of God the Word.

1. Badger Vol. II. p. 53

Holy is the tabernacle of the most Highest.

The temple of God the Word. With great glory Mary carried in her bosom. And was mother and handmaid to Jesus the Saviour of all. And therefore all creatures. Rejoice in the day of her festival.....¹.

In the above stanza, A. J. Maclean points out that "the temple of God the Word" has been changed to "The temple of the Son, the Word" in the Roman Catholic Khudra.² *Khaikla* is the temple or Abode. These expressions add to the reverence paid to Mary in this Church and not as proof for the expression "Mother of God". The priestly prayer for Wednesday evening is the nearest that could be argued as acceptable to the Roman Catholics and other Churches which accept the council of Ephesus of 431 A. D.

Arm us, O our Lord and God with strong and invincible armour, by the prayers of

1. *Khudra*, Vol. I. p. 21 (Syriac numbering) It must be noted that the anthems and prayers of Wednesday evening have special emphasis on Mary. It seems that Wednesday is specially set apart for Mary.
2. A. J. Maclean, *East Syrian Daily Offices.*, London: Rivington, Percival and Company. 1894. p. 30. Footnote 4. Mr. V. B. Vaidyanath Iyer states in his judgement of Original Suit No: 66 of 1086 dated 17th April 1920 para 52 that "in one place *Haikola*; in *Haikalai Dalaha Meltha* is attempted to be altered" while referring to the alterations made to *Khudra* (exhibit 69) in the same suit.

the blessed Mother. And give us with her a portion and share in thy heavenly bridechamber, Lord of all etc.¹

Dr. Charles Payngot argues² that since this prayer is addressed to *Maran U Alahan* (our Lord and God), the expression *immakhta Mbarakhtha* (Thy blessed mother) is applicable to 'our Lord and our God'. Therefore, he concludes that "Mother of God" is found in the *Khudra* of the church of the East.³ The present writer thinks, however, that such conclusion is unwarranted. This priestly prayer is addressed to the second person of the Trinity "Our Lord and God" and not to the Trinity. The Nestorians do not deny the divinity of Christ. They do not consider Mary as the mother of Christ, the man. Mary is the mother of Christ who is perfect God and perfect man. It is to that Christ the priest who prays. It only shows the honour paid to her in this church.

F. Mother of God (Imme D' Alaha):

It is very important to examine the title applied to Virgin Mary in order to determine the

1. *Khudra*. Vol. 1. p. 22 (Syriac numbering)

2. During personal conversation at Metropolitan Palace, Trichur in April 1973.

3. He states that late Mar Abimaleck Thimotheus Metropolitan of Trichur who died in 1945 A. D. had admitted to Dr. Placid Podipara that this priestly prayer amounts to the acceptance of the expression 'Mother of God'.

faith of this Church. It is clear that Nestorius did not use the title "Theotokos" to Virgin Mary. The Church of the East also took the position of Nestorius when they, after several years, happened to hear about the Nestorian controversy.¹

The heading found for the prayers of the Memorial Days of Blessed Virgin Mary in the *Khudra* is "Memorial of Saint Mary. Bearer of Messiah".² This is a very cautious expression. *Yaldath Mshikha* is less than *Imme d' Mshikha* (Mother of Messiah). In the prayers, though not in the title, the Mother of Messiah is seen.³

In this connection an observation found in the Lambeth conference report of 1920 is worth noting.

".....The watchword Theotokos is absent from their service books, and in one place is repudiated; on the other

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1. It is very important to know that the Church of the East was not founded by Nestorius. As a matter of fact he was the bishop of Constantinople which had nothing to do with Seleucia Ctesiphon, the then head quarters of the Church of the East. It is after both Ephesus (431 A. D.) and Chalcedon [451 A. D.] the Church of the East heard about this controversy. Since *Immo d' Mshikha* is biblical they kept it and refused to make the innovation of Ephesus.
 2. *Khudra*, Vol. I pp. 585-615. Headings on each page.
 3. *Ibid.* p. 611.

hand, its equivalent in other words is several times found..¹

In Taxa there is a prayer for the boy's mother it is as followe:

And mayest thou, the mother of the boy, be moved in the hidden man which is the heart to good works..... ; and thou and thy son, may ye be kept from all harm by the prayers of the Virgin clothed in light, the second heaven St. Mary, who bare Christ our God, and by the prayer of all the Saints, now and at all time, and for ever. Amen.²

Imme Damshikha (Mother of Messiah) is used as a test case to determine whether a prayer book is a Nestorian prayer book or not. If the expression of *Imme Dalaha* (mother of God) is found in a Syriac book it cannot be a Nestorian document. It can be a Jacobite or uniate. If *Imme Dalaha* is found in a pre-Portuguese Syriac manuscripts in India, it can be sure that the manuscripts have been tampered with. So far we have never come across anything contrary to it.

1. Lambeth Conference [1837. 1930], London S. P. C. K. 1948, p.132.

2. Taxa. of Joseph Kellaitha. op. cit. pp. 203, 204 We may notice this close approach to the term *Theotokos*. *East Syrian Daily Offices* p. p. 256-7.

In the liturgy, *Khudra* etc. the expression *Imme Damshikha* is often repeated while *Imme Dalaha* is never mentioned. In the *Khudra* which was submitted as Ex: 69 in the suit O. S. 66 of 1086 (1911 A. D.) there were changes made from *Imme Damshikha* into *Imme dalaha*. This expression would mislead us completely. The remarks of the chief Judge of the chief court of Cochin in his Judgement are worthy of mention in this connection.

“My conclusion is that Ex. 69 was used in the plaint Church in its’ unaltered condition and the alterations we now find in it are unauthorised and cannot be taken notice of for the purpose of determining the doctrines of the plaint church.”¹

There is an unaltered *Khudra* in the church used by Mar Mellus and left in this church when he left Trichur in 1882 A. D. This *Khudra* which is produced in the British Court in the Palayur suit was called Ex. 195 in the case O S. No: 66 of 1086 (1911 A. D.) Whatever found in this

1. T. S. Narayana Iyer, *Judgement* in the appeal suit No: 8 of 1096 (M. E) P. 36 para 67. There are various views, expressed by both parties regarding who and when these alterations were made. Much of the space was devoted for this in both the judgments of the District Court as well as that of the Chief Court. It is not important for us here to go into all those details.
cf. V. B. Vaidya Nalh Iyer, *Judgment* p. 43 para 52.
cf. T. S. Narayana Iyer, *Judgement* p. 35. para 67.

Khudra could be taken as the faith of the Trichur Church. It contains only *Imme Damshikha* and not *Imme d' alaha*. The following remark of the Chief Judge is reasonable. He says:¹

If the doctrines of the church were not in accordance with 195 (*Khudra*), Mellus would not have presented it without making the necessary alterations.

Therefore comparing with the unaltered reading of Ex. 195, i. e., Mellus *Khudra*, the other *Khudra*, Ex. 69 was corrected back to its original. Hence there is no single place where the *Imme d' alaha* is seen. In other words *Imme Damshikha*, the test case of the Nestorian Church is always used in all the service books found in this church.

The name of the church is also important. Though the official name of the *Valiappalli* is Marth Mariyam Church (St. Mary Church), the old name was *Vyakula Mathavin* Church. The Malayalam words *Vyakula Mvthavin* means Lady of Dolours. During the court case O. S. 66 of 1086 (1911 A. D.) an attempt was made by the plaintiffs to show that it is *Vyakula Deiva*

1. T. S. Narayan Iyer. *Judgment* P. 36 Para 67, one may argue that the alterations were in this book much before the construction of the Trichur Church. It is only a wild guess to justify one's point of view.

Mathavu Church. *Deiva Mathavu* in Malaya-lam may mean Mother of God. About this claim we read in the Judgment:

Plaintiff's case set up in the examination of 'Pw 1 / (13th Plaintiff) is that the name of the church is *Vyakula Deiva Mathavu* and therefore the doctrine of the church is that Mary must be called 'Mother of God'. But the evidence of this witness is clearly untrue on his own admission for in the next breath he says that the name of the church engraved on 'the portals is *Vyakula Mathavu*', only.¹

The word *Vyakula Mathavu*² is used not only in all the documents but also even in the plaint. The judgment referred to above reads: "It is worthy of note that even in the present plaint the church is described as 'The Church of *Vyakula Mathavu*'".³ Therefore it is clear that there is no inconsistency with the general Nestorian expression in regard to the Virgin Mary. But on the contrary in the same judgment we read that Patriarch Audo, and, others including Mar Abdisho

1. V. B. Vaidyanath Iyer O. S. 1066 of 1036 *Judgment* p 46, 47 Para, 59, lines (46) : 53 - (47) : 5.

2. The name on the portals was changed to *Marth Maryam* church in 1925 A. D.

3. V. B. Vaidyanath Iyer, *Judgment*, op. cit. P. 47. Para 59 Lines 10-11.

used the expression "Mother of God."¹ It is difficult to believe that these documents are genuine, As the said judgment points out even "assuming that all these documents are genuine, they do not avail the plaintiffs, for none of them relate to the public services in the church".²

It is not surprising if Patriarch Audo of Mosul used this expression Mother of God because the Catholic Chaldeans were using it at that time. As for the statement Abdisho used this expression in 1890 A. D , the opinion of the Hindu Judge is worth noting.

With regard to Ex BR, the only person who speaks to the signature therein as that, of Mar Abdeeso is Pw 16 but I do not think he can be relied upon, as he has very little regard for truth and as it is extremely improbable that Mar Abdeeso who all along put himself forward as a Nestorian, would have used the expression the question.³

As for the accounts with the title "Mother of God" the Judge dismisses it saying: "I do not think Pw 17 can be believed when he speaks to the

1. Cf. *Idid*. Lines 12-20

2. *Ibid* Lines 20-22.

3. V. B. Vaidyanath Iyer. *Judgment* P. 47 para 59, lines 38-43.

handwriting of certain persons in some of the entries."¹

A possible explanation is necessary for the controversy of the title "Mother of God" in this church after the arrival of Mar Thimotheus in 1908. Why did he raise this issue at all? Since Mar Thimotheus objected to the use of this title in the Trichur Church, is it possible to guess that there existed a practice contrary to it? The relevant portion of the above mentioned judgment reads as follows:

The contention of Mr. Anantha Rama Iyer² that because the 1st defendant³ mentioned in his discourses that Mary should not be called Mother of God, it must be taken that he did so because he found that she was called Mother of God in the plaint church, is not entitled to any weight for if it is accepted, it would follow that only such points would form the legitimate subjects for discourse as are found to be at variance with the doctrines or practices of the church. This position is hardly maintainable.⁴

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1. *ibid.* p. 48 para 60 lines 40-43. Pw 17 means Plaintiff's Witness No: 17
 2. Lawyer for the Plaintiffs
 3. Mar Thimotheus Metropolitan.
 4. V. B. Vaidyanath Iyer p. 49. Para 62 lines 27-34

This image reached the Trichur church only after 1860 and before 1870. Thomas Whitehouse describing the decorations inside the Trichur Church states

Pictures, images in gaudy colours, were the other chief ornaments of the building; one of the latter, a showey looking French China image of the Virgin and child, resplendent with gilding-which could have cost a very few franc in Paris-was exhibited as a specially admired object; it had been recently presented to the congregation by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pondicherry.'

The question of "Mother of God" as an expression used in Trichur Church was vehemently argued in the Chief Court by Mr. Ramachandra Iyer the former Judge. He said that there was some development in the teaching of Mar Thimotheus, the first defendant, who, according to him, was even willing to accept Mother of God.² Since the above statement is misleading, the appeal judgment quotes the cross examination of Mar Thimotheus, i. e., ex. K. S. the deposition in a defamation suit O. S. 127 of 1085 (1910 A. D.). Since it is important to know the view of Mar Thimotheus, it is given below.

1. Thomas White house, *op. cit.* P. 175.

2. Cf. T. S. Narayana Iyer. *Judgment* p. 44 Para 85.

In Godhead there are three persons viz., Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I have not known any Christian entertaining the belief that there is a Mother for God, the Father. Christ has a mother. Christ is perfect God. I have no objection if Mary is called the Mother of God in the sense that she is the Mother of Christ in whom there is perfect God. I do not admit that the Holy Virgin has any divinity in her like the three persons in the Trinity. It is on this account that I said in my examination—in-chief that Mary cannot be called Divine Mary".¹

Our discussion of the Virgin Mary in relation to the Trichur Church will be incomplete without a reference to the beautiful image of Madonna, Virgin Mary with child, which was in this church. This wooden image of *Mathavu* (Mother) was a valuable and attractive image. The people of this church in the last century and in the beginning of this century are said to have paid much respect to this image. Even the great revival sermons of Archdeacon Thoma,² who was known as Father

1. *Ib d.* pp. 44—5 para 85.

2. Father Kuruvilla was sent by Abdisho from Chennangiri to Trichur to preach against the Roman influence found in the congregation in Trichur.

Kuruville, in his great crusade against image worship in this church did not succeed sufficiently, as this beautiful image of *Mathavu* (Mother) had captured the devotion and veneration of this congregation. Even Mar Thimotheus Metropolitan did not dare to destroy this image, although he was bold enough to lock it up.¹ It was long after the death of Mar Thimotheus some young men under the leadership of a priest of this church, Rev. P. T. John, burned this beautiful piece of art, into ashes.²

In conclusion, we state that since the words *Daiva Mathavu*³ or *Imme d' alaha*⁴ are not used in any of the public services, *Imme d' nlaha* or theotokos is not the accepted faith of this church. If the letters and accounts produced are genuine, which are not accepted by the court as genuine, we can explain it as the Roman influence introduced in the days of Catholic Chaldean administration. Moreover accepting the unaltered readings of the Mellus Khudra (ex. 69) let us conclude that *Imme d' Mshikha* is the standard expression of this church.⁵ The Chief Judge wrote: "

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1. There are some images now kept hidden in this church.
 2. It was in November 1951, the Monday after the festival of *Qudash Idtha* (Hallowing of the church) in the presence of a large crowd. The present writer is an eye-witness of this unfortunate event.
 3. Mother of God in Malayalam. (*Imme D' alaha* in Syriac.)
 4. Begetter of God in Malayalam equivalent of *Yaldath Alaha* in Syriac.
 5. These are found to be in the letters, accounts etc.

am therefore of opinion that the doctrine of the saint church in regard to this matter is as set up by the defendants''.¹ Hence *Imme d' Msikha*.

In spite of the fact that the name *Vyakula Mathavu* is not used for the Chaldean Syrian *Taliapalli* today, it is still known by the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is called Marth Mariam² *Taliapalli*. This shows the devotion to Virgin Mary by the members of this church.

7. Summary.

The children of the Church of the East learn in the Sunday Schools that Virgin Mary is subject to salvation since she too is a human being.³ To the question "What deserving designations have the Holy Fathers and the church given to the Virgin Mary?", the answer is given as follows:⁴

They call her "The Ever Virgin"

The second Heaven, "The Arc of Light",
"The Mother of Light and Life" and the like.

T. S. Narayana Iyer, Judgment P. 45 para 85.

Marth Maryam is not specially Nestorian or Chaldean name. There are several churches in Kerala by this name. All Syrians including West Syrians, i. e., Orthodox Syrians have churches called Marth Maryam

Mar Themotheus, (Rev. M. P. Francis Eng. tr). *Messianic Teachings* Trichur, Oriental Printers. 1957, p. 25, Question 111

Ibid. Question 112

The answer to the question "How was the Messiah born"? is also worth quoting.

Blessed Virgin Mary, by the order of God conceived (sic) of the Holy spirit, and after nine months, the period of concievement brought forth Messiah, the Son of God and David. (Luke 1: 26-38; Matt 1: 18-25; Luke 2: 1-7; Matt 2: 1-15 etc.)¹

The questions 104-106 explain why the members of this church object to the title Theotokos.

104. question : Can we, therefore, designate Mary 'Mother of God' or Theotokos?

Answer : No. It is not at all just and proper.

105 question : Why is it not just to call her so?

Answer : Since she has not brought forth God, Who is the Spirit.

106. question : Then whom did she bring forth?

Answer : She brought forth only Messiah who was at once both true God and true man.

The first Anthem said for the second Wednesday in the evening prayers in all the churches is considered the most significant passage regarding the place of Mary in Incarnation.

1. *Ibid.* P. 23 question 103

2. *Messianic Teaching, op. cit.* p. 23.

From the house of David and Abraham the Creator chose a Virgin. And made his hidden power to dwell in her. By the power of the Holy Ghost she conceived and bore Christ, the Judge of the heights and the depths.¹

The discussion on Mariology and on the title 'Mother of God' cannot be concluded without referring to the first of the twelve anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria against Nestorius.

If any one will not confess that the Emmanuel is very God, and that therefore the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God (THEOTOKOS), in as much as in the flesh, she bore the Word of God made flesh (as it is written "The Word was made flesh")²

This charge against him was replied by Nestorius in his counter anathematism.

If anyone says that the Emmanuel is true God, and not rather *God with us*, that is, that he has united himself to a life from the Virgin Mary, and dwelt in it; and if anyone calls Mary the mother of God the Word, and not rather mother of him who is Emmanuel; and if he maintains

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1. *Khudra*. Vol. I. p. 37 (Syriac numbering)
 2. H. R. Percival (ed) *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, N. P. N. F. Second Series. Vol. XIV. Grand Rapids, B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957

that God the word has *changed* himself into the flesh, which he only assumed in order to make his Godhead visible, and to be found in form as a man, let him be anathema.¹

The title of Theotokos was the crux of the Christological controversy for Cyril.²

1. *Ibid*

2. This must be the reason why he put in the first of the twelve anathematisms against Nestorius. Cyril mentioned about it only at the end of the Synodal letter, i.e., third letter of Cyril to Nestorius. C. J. Hefele blames Cyril for putting "the contested term *Theotokos* aggressively to the front." C. J. Hefele, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

CHAPTER V

MISSIOLOGY

When John Stewart wrote the history of the Church of the East, he rightly described this Church as the "most missionary of all Churches."¹ This Church started from Edessa and spread in the Persian empire. Suffering the persecutions of the Persian Kings Sapor II (A. D. 339-379), Bahram V (A. D. 420) and Yesdgerd II (A. D. 448), this missionary Church grew. Its monastic movement expedited the missionary endeavours.

To Arabia it spread. In central and eastern Asia, it flourished fast. A King of the Turks was converted to Christianity in the year A. D. 781, during the Patriarchate of Mar Thimotheus 1,²

1. John Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, op. cit. , p XXXIV.
2. A. Mingana, "Early Spread of Christianity," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol IX, p. 306. Cf. J. Stewart, p. 83.

this Patriarch ordained a Metropolitan for the Turks and was about to do the same for Tibet.¹

The Mission to India does not have to be described here, as it has been already shown in Part one of this study that the Indian Church had received several bishops from the Nestorian Patriarchs. Ceylon is also believed to have been its missionary field around 400 A. D. Japan too received Nestorian missionaries.² It spread to Java too.³ There are three crosses at Leh near Ladak, at 18000 ft high, inscribed in 800 A. D.⁴

It was in China that this great missionary Church flourished since A. D. 635. It was there it declined suddenly in the fourteenth century. It is there that a large stone tablet stood at Hsi-an-Fu, erected in A. D. 781 telling the story of the missionary propaganda of the Nestorian Church in China from A. D. 635 to 781.

The Monument of Hsi-an-Fu gives us very valuable historical information about the mission of Alopen who went to China in A. D. 635. It has been suggested that he came with an embassy from Khotan or some other Central Asian Kingdoms.⁵

1. *Ibid.*

2. P. Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, Tokyo: Maruzen. 1930, pp. 444—447.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 354.

4. Mar Aprem, *Nestorian Missions*, p. 100.

5. Raymond L. Oppenheim, *The First Nestorian Mission to China and its Failure*, Berkely: Shires Bookstore, 1971. p. 29.

Inscriptions were written on this stone in both Syriac and Chinese alternately. On the left face of the Monument the names of the seventy monks and priests are given in both the above mentioned languages. The only name of the Bishop out of the seventy is of Mar Yokhannan in Syriac or the Bishop Yao-han in the Chinese.

Unfortunately there is no monument to give us the details of the period after A. D. 781. We know something of the latter period from the Imperial edicts. After the Tang dynasty the Nestorian missionary enterprise died out in China. Nevertheless Christianity did not disappear completely. Marcos, one of the members of the embassy sent by the Mongol Il-Khan, Arghun, to Europe, was ordained Metropolitan of the See of Khatai and of Oug in North China by Patriarch Denha in A.D. 1280.¹

The Patriarch consecrated in A. D. 1291 by the name Mar Yabalaha was the only Chinese ever to become a Patriarch in this Church.² By the end of the thirteenth century the Nestorian Church was widely spread. At this time Assemani gives a list of no less than twenty seven Metropolitan seats extending over the whole of

1. John Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 191, 192.

2. *Marganeetha*, which gives the list of all Patriarchs of this Church writes after his name, *bar Thurqoye*, meaning son of a Turk. *Marganeetha*, *op. cit.*, p. 75 (Syriac numerals).

Asia. Two hundred Bishops were connected with these mission areas.¹ In the year A. D. 1369 Ming dynasty replaced the Tartar dynasty of the Mongols. This resulted in the final eclipse of Nestorians in China.

When the missionary enterprise failed in China in the fifteenth century, there was a general decadence of the missionary activities of the Church of the East. John Stewart considers three factors led to the decadence of the Nestorian Missionary endeavour. They were persecution, deception and compromise.² Two additional factors are the extermination by Mongols and Tamerlane as well as the absorption by Roman Catholics.

The remnant which escaped the persecutions of Tamerlane finally found refuge in the mountains in Kurdistan. The split caused by Sulqa in A. D. 1552 further weakened this Church. Further persecuted by the Kurds and Turks, the Church of the East became still weaker in the nineteenth century they were not able to send a single Bishop from the Middle East even to India except consecrating an Indian, Anthony Thondanatta, who went to Kurdistan.³

1. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Vol. III, op. cit., II, p. 503.

2. John Stewart, op. cit., pp. 217, 260.

3. This consecration took place at Kudshanis, in A. D. 1862.

The first World War in 1914-18 further weakened this Church. This Church was estimated to be about two hundred thousand strong before A. D. 1914. Now the population in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, U. S. A., Australia, and the Chaldean Syrians in India would come to a little less than two hundred thousand.¹

This general decadence of the Church made her forget its past missionary heritage. The decline of the monastic movement also contributed to the total annihilation of the missionary movement in this "most missionary Church the world has ever seen."² With special reference to the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East in India, continued litigation is considered a basic cause. There were no resources for meeting the primary obligation of the Church in regard to its mission.

Still signs of hope are becoming visible recently among the men who feel the call to missionary work. It is quite possible with the revival of the monastic movement in this Church, many young men will go out to take up the work carried on by their forefathers. The missionary activities of the various denominations in Kerala at present provide the incentive for the members of

1, This is the estimate of the present writer based on personal knowledge. There has never been a correct census of the Nestorians. Some of their claims are examples of oriental exaggeration.

2. John Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

this ancient missionary Church to participate in the evangelization of the people in India and abroad.

John Stewart concludes his book with the following remarks which should naturally inspire and encourage children of the Church today.

It still left behind it an imperishable memory that may well prove an incentive in the matter of loyalty to Christ and devotion to His service, to the more highly favoured Churches of today.¹

The present writer fervently hopes that the imperishable memory of the innumerable missionary martyrs of the Nestorian Church will provide an incentive not only to the "more highly favoured Churches today," but to the members of this ancient Church, the heirs of this great tradition.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In regard to Christology this study has reached the conclusion that the Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur believes in the Christology which is usually nicknamed Nestorian heresy. It has also shown that the Syriac manuscripts and printed books found in this Church teach the Christology of one person; two *Qnome* and two natures. Having examined this Christological formula this thesis upholds the theory put forward earlier by Professor J. F. Bethune Baker that Nestorius was not a "Nestorian."

In understanding the *Qnoma*, this writer rejects the translation given by some scholars as person and puts forward an alternate view that it should be understood as "the individuated

nature" or concrete nature, if the word *Kiana* (nature) is understood as "abstract nature." *Qnoma* is also translated in this thesis as hypostasis. This is done so because several other writers have done likewise; for instance, in their recent work *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*, Luise Abramowski and Alan Goodman translate the word as hypostasis. But hypostasis does not convey the true meaning of *Qnoma* as used by the Nestorian Fathers. The present writer is of the opinion that some better word could be coined in order to convey the true meaning which the members of this Church attributed to this controversial, but crucial, term *Qnoma*.

This thesis does not argue that this Christology, even if it is understood properly, agrees completely with the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon of A. D. 451. Though the Nestorian Christology has several points of agreement with Tome of Leo, as Nestorius himself has claimed, over against his opponent Cyril of Alexandria, the observations made by V. C. Samuel, quoted in this dissertation, give us a new direction to explore further the points of agreement between Cyril's Christology and the Christology of Nestorius.

Though this Church considered Nestorius as a saint, this thesis explains that this is not a

Church founded by Nestorius. The Syriac writings quoted in this study has made abundantly clear beyond a shadow of doubt that Nestorius did not know Syriac and the East Syrian Church of the Persian empire knew no Greek. There was no contact between the East Syrian Churches of Persia and the "heretic" and his supporters in A. D. 431. Only after the death of Nestorius, when the East Syrian Church heard of his teaching, did they agree with his view. The East Syrian Church which had no part in the Christological battles between Nestorius and Cyril, nor had any knowledge of this unhappy controversy during the life time of the champions, has been unjustly described as the Church founded by Nestorius.

The separation of the East Syrian Church from the rest of the Christendom and particularly from the jurisdiction of Antioch had taken place before the Christological controversy had sprung up in A. D. 428. This thesis has shown the existence of a canon of the Synod of Dadisho in A. D. 424 which forbade the bishops of this Church to have any ecclesiastical jurisdictional contact with the West. This fact itself leads us to the conclusion that the separation of the East Syrian Church was motivated by political, cultural, ethnic, linguistic or personal considerations rather than any theological reason for there was none such extant in A. D. 424.

In our discussion of the relevance of the Nestorian Christology against the background of the Pauline Christology we have discovered that all the important Pauline ideas of self-emptying, image of God, form of a servant, historical Jesus etc., have been found in Nestorius too. It was from his biblical foundation Nestorius formulated his theory of prosopic union.

The Christological formula of this Church, as we have seen in the many passages quoted in this study, is that of the prosopic union rejecting the formula of hypostatic union accepted by both Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Churches (Greek, Russian etc.) This prosopic union is a three tier Christology where the union is not at the first level of natures, nor at the second level of the hypostases but at the third level of the *prosopon*. To the members of this Church, the idea of perfect God and perfect man is understood only if Christ has both natures and *Qnome* of both God and man and the union has taken place only at the level of *prosopon*.

As for the Mariology, the Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur is in agreement with other 'Nestorian' Churches. It refuses to call Mary *Theotokos* unlike the Orthodox Church. However, this thesis puts forward the view that despite the refusal to use the title *Theotokos* to the Blessed Virgin Mary, this Church, like other 'Nestorian'

Churches throughout the world, is in general agreement with the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) Churches in giving respect and veneration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A Nestorian is an Orthodox without *Theotokes*.

Like other Eastern Churches this Church has not developed a dogma of Mariology. Mariology is not practised. It does not overdo the respect due to Mary as the Roman Catholics seem to do, nor does it underestimate the honour due to the Blessed Virgin Mary which some of the protestant Churches have admittedly done. The details discussed in this thesis in connection with Mariology would lead to the inevitable conclusion that this Church tries to give a proper place to the Blessed Virgin Mary avoiding the excesses and at the same time trying to save the Church from the danger of ignoring the Mother of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In this context, it must be stated further that nobody in this Church has ever questioned the Virgin Birth, as some modern theologians in various Churches do today. She is ever Virgin *before, in and after* the birth of Jesus Christ.

With regard to its faith we have discussed in detail the special emphasis of the Nestorian Christology on the humanity of our Lord stating

that in Jesus Christ there are two distinct *Qnome* divine and human. This emphasis on the humanity of the Saviour of the mankind saved the Church in the fifth century from the heresy of the followers of Apollinarius who were still in the capital city of Constantinople where Nestorius worked as the head of the Church during the period A. D. 428-31. This emphasis on humanity is generally recognised today in the contemporary theological debate throughout the world. The Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur, therefore, the present writer hopes, will have a definite contribution to make in the development of an Indian Christian theology utilising the initiatives provided by some emerging dynamics in the religious and cultural context in Independent India.

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